MARVEL MASTERWORKS

THE UNCANNY X-MEN

VOLUME 15

THE UNCANNY X-MEN Nos. 220-231, ANNUAL No. 11
& THE X-MEN vs. THE AVENGERS Nos. 1-4
CHRIS CLAREMONT, ROGER STERN & MARC SILVESTRI

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PRESENTS

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COLLECTING

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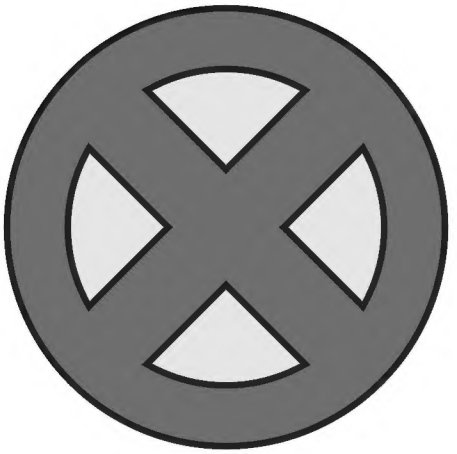
CHRIS CLAREMONT

ROGER STERN • MARC SILVESTRI



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CREDITS

THE
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NOS. 220-231, ANNUAL NO. 11
& THE X-MEN VS. THE AVENGERS NOS. 1-4

Writer: Chris Claremont (Nos. 220-231, *Annual* No. 11)
Roger Stern (*The X-Men vs. The Avengers* Nos. 1-3)
Tom DeFalco (No. 228; *The X-Men vs. The Avengers* No. 4)
Jim Shooter (*The X-Men vs. The Avengers* No. 4)

Pencilers/Layouts: Marc Silvestri (Nos. 220-222, 224-227, 229-230; *The X-Men vs. The Avengers* Nos. 1-3)
Kerry Gammill (No. 223)
Rick Leonardi (Nos. 228, 231)
Alan Davis (*Annual* No. 11)
Keith Pollard (*The X-Men vs. The Avengers* No. 4)

Inkers/Finishers: Dan Green (Nos. 220-223, 225-227, 229, 231)
Bob Wiacek (No. 224)
Terry Austin (No. 228)
Josef Rubinstein (No. 230; *The X-Men vs. The Avengers* Nos. 1-4)
Paul Neary (*Annual* No. 11)
Bob McLeod (*The X-Men vs. The Avengers* No. 4)
Al Williamson (*The X-Men vs. The Avengers* No. 4)
Al Milgrom (*The X-Men vs. The Avengers* No. 4)

Letterers: Tom Orzechowski (Nos. 220-231, *Annual* No. 11)
Joe Rosen (*The X-Men vs. The Avengers* Nos. 1-4)

Colorists: Glynis Oliver (Nos. 220-226, 229-231, *Annual* No. 11)
Bill Wray (Nos. 226-228)
Christie Scheele (*The X-Men vs. The Avengers* Nos. 1-4)

Editors: Ann Nocenti (Nos. 220-231, *Annual* No. 11; *The X-Men vs. The Avengers* Nos. 1-4)
Mark Gruenwald (*The X-Men vs. The Avengers* Nos. 1-4)

Color & Art Reconstruction: Logan Kelleher & Kellustration (Nos. 220-231, *Annual* No. 11; *The X-Men vs. The Avengers* Nos. 1-4)

Special Thanks: Tom Brevoort, Rich Donnelly, Mike Hansen, Ralph Macchio, Paul Nicholson & Patrick Neighly

X-MEN CREATED BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

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INTRODUCTION
BY CHRIS CLAREMONT

In the beginning, there was Stan.

Then, Stan and Steve Ditko and the Amazing Spider-Man.

Then, Stan and Jack Kirby—and just about everything else that made up the Marvel pantheon.

Very much, a long time ago, in a comic book universe so very, *very* far away.

So much has changed since then. And, hopefully, will continue to change—fingers crossed, for the better—as long as there are writers and artists to bring new ideas to life and readers to enjoy them.

When Stan started Marvel down this road, it probably seemed so much easier. He had an idea; he went to Jack and, together, they brought it to life. Pick a character in the primal Marvel pantheon—outside of Spidey and Doctor Strange, which he created with Steve—chances are it was created by Stan and Jack. Titles ranging from *Avengers* to *Fantastic Four* to *X-Men* all sprang from their imaginations and their hands.

Thing is, though, hard as it to believe, Stan and Jack were only human. They actually had limits. Which meant, in time, they moved on to other things. The creative responsibilities of the titles they brought into being were handed off to others.

Which is where this compilation of X-stories begins, with an arc of issues that bring together two of Marvel's premier teams, the Avengers and the Uncanny X-Men.

Thing to note about these two teams—about *all* the teams in the Marvel pantheon, actually—is that their lineups changed over time. The original cast of *Avengers* consisted of Iron Man, Ant-Man, Hulk, Thor and the Wasp. In the lead-off saga of this volume, the Avengers are Captain America, Thor, Doctor Druid, Captain Marvel, She-Hulk and Black Knight. The original X-team: Professor X, Cyclops, Beast, Iceman, Angel and Marvel Girl. The current team (appearing in this story): Storm, Wolverine, Dazzler, Rogue and Havok—plus the man who was once their arch-enemy but is now apparently their ally, Magneto. (Two current members were absent from this arc, Psylocke and Longshot.)

The Avengers are the outright defenders of the planet and humanity; officially, they're heroes, known and respected throughout the world. The X-Men, not so much. There's a core difference, you see, between the one group and the other: the X-Men are *mutants*. Super-beings like the Avengers gain their abilities mainly through "accidents" of fate. Captain America is injected with a super-serum. She-Hulk gets hers from a madcap dose of gamma rays. Thor is an Asgardian God.

Mutants, though, are *born* different. Their powers and abilities are derived from their genes. In terms of evolution, they're something completely new—and different. One group is *Homo sapiens*-plus; the other *Homo sapiens* ***superior***. And that seminal difference makes them "feared and hated" by the world that the X-team has sworn to protect. Doesn't matter what they do or how many times they literally save the world, they still find themselves in the role of outcasts. Occasionally, with even those who consider them friends taking up arms against them.

The epitome of that conflict is Magneto, considered by most to be the ultimate "super villain," a mega-terrorist who's proved himself time and again a threat to the entire planet. And yet—he's also a child of the Holocaust who survived the *Shoah* determined that what happened to his friends and family would not happen as well to his people. From his perspective he has forever stood as the defender of mutantkind. In his life, a Russian nuclear missile submarine fired on him with two nuclear warheads; he responded by sinking the submarine. And as well, by destroying a Siberian city—*after* ensuring that the populace had been safely evacuated. He was making a point: Hit me, I hit back harder. To him, both self-defense and a warning; leave me—and my people—alone. To the rest of the world, an act of super-powered terrorism that must be punished.

This is what's always been so much fun about Marvel, that actions take place in the "real" world—real places wherein the characters' actions can have both real and lasting consequences. Magneto finds himself before the World Court, on trial for his life; he takes what he considers are necessary actions to protect himself, only to realize that those steps may not have been necessary. Yet because of what he did, he'll never know the actual truth. This story, like many in the X-Canon, comes down to a moment of trust—but is that trust fulfilled or betrayed and from that moment, as always, what comes next?

From there, the volume leaps off the proverbial cliff into the ongoing run of *Uncanny*, beginning with the *eleventh* Annual, which sets off a confrontation between our heroes and a pan-dimensional mega-villain who needs the X-team as patsies to help him acquire his own heart's desire. Either that or he destroys the world. Of course, a threat they've heard before, as Logan points out to him, but also one, being heroes, they must confront. Great Alan Davis art, that has the team's newest members—Dazzler and Psylocke—questioning whether or not this is the life they truly want for themselves? After all, how can even these heroes resist an adversary that offers all their heart's desire?

From there, it's back to the regular arc of monthly issues, brought to glorious visual life by Marc Silvestri interspersed with Rick Leonardi and Kerry Gammill—beginning with Ororo's quest to find the man responsible for creating the device that stole away her mutant abilities. That man is Forge, who calls himself the "Maker." Because he can make *anything*. It's hard for her, falling in love with a man who smashed her life as a super hero to bits. Equally hard for him to make amends—to the woman *he* loves.

Ororo's aided in this journey by Naze, Medicine Chief of the Northern Cheyenne, Forge's own teacher who, unknown to her until far too late, is not at all what he appears to be.

At the same time, the rest of the team—led in Ororo's absence—by the Wolverine finds themselves facing off once more against their deadliest adversaries, the team of murderous mutants known as the Marauders. In the "Mutant Massacre," these villains slaughtered much of the mutant community known as the Morlocks and crippled three of the *Uncanny* team: Shadowcat, Nightcrawler and Colossus.

Here, we get to meet their leader, known as Mr. Sinister. Here, the X-team travels to San Francisco to rescue Madelyne Pryor, the now-estranged wife of Scott Summers, from the Marauders' latest attempt to claim her for their boss.

The team's journey takes them from San Francisco to Dallas and ultimately to Australia, embracing both triumph and tragedy, with the usual gamut of surprises along the way.

There's a lot going on in the lives of these mutants, and this mega-compilation demonstrates that to an impressive extent, not simply in the core arc of stories themselves but in some treats, as they say, brought along for the ride. Among them: an article for "The Mutant Report" interviewing Roger Stern, the writer of the *X-Avengers*, wherein he describes the thought processes that involve the choice of the characters involved and more importantly the rationales behind their actions as the story progresses. Not simply the "what happens" but the characters' rationales as they occur. His core sympathies are plain but even when you have an affection for the Wolverine, how can anyone truly turn his back on Captain America? Making the interview even more fascinating is the fact that *way* back in the day, during the lead-up to the "Dark Phoenix Saga," he was the *editor* of *The X-Men*. Now, years later, he gets to approach a very different team as a writer. As he says in the interview, it's as much a journey of discovery for him as it is for the readers.

Accompanying this interview is a far more fascinating presentation that one might consider required reading for any nascent storyteller, Roger's original plot-synopsis, complete with notes and suggestions by the arc's co-editor, Mark Gruenwald, a comic book legend who sadly passed from the creative stage well before his time. One of his more intriguing, albeit casual, notes refer to the absence of the last two members of the current X-team, Psylocke and Longshot—the team telepath and a character with an uncanny talent

for manifesting the right piece of luck at just the right moment. The role of an editor when he or she reads the pitch is to ask questions, whose answers might lead to a necessary clarification of actions and rationales *or* turn the whole idea off in a brand-new direction, for the better. There's an idea here—the presence of the super villain the Mandarin—that doesn't survive to the final published version of the story, a resolution that basically re-establishes the original status-quo. The published version of the arc goes in a completely different direction—so, herein, readers can compare what-was with what might-have-been and decide for themselves which one they prefer.

On a wholly different note, also included is a six-page story by me and Marshall Rogers that was included in a collection of reprints that was sold back-in-the-day by Sears. The idea being, of course, folks would buy the reprint anthology simply to get this really *cool* original tale. And from my wholly prejudiced perspective, it is *really* cool—all about what Logan'll do if some fool dares threaten his true-love, Mariko Yashida. And in the process, introduce any new readers to the Wolverine, giving them a basic introduction to the man and his abilities. Best of all, the story comes to a happy ending. For the X-Canon, that's a rare thing indeed.

Couple of more things worth mentioning: a totally ridiculous—in other words, really funny—one-page piece by legendary comics creator (in both senses of the word, as artist and humorist) Fred Hembeck, wherein Logan says more in one panel than he usually says in a whole issue, if not a story-*arc*! (Can't imagine *who* he's poking fun at, can you?)

And next, something completely different, the companion to Hembeck's piece, a solo-page vignette by me and Marc Silvestri (plus superb, well-nigh legendary X-Canon inker Terry Austin, plus equally legendary X-Canon letterer Tom Orzechowski), touching base with the New Mutants and the two surviving members of the X-Cast as they try to (*spoilers!*) deal with what they believe is the death of the X-team. Sometimes, less *is* more and if the page is done just right, the impact can be devastating. To me, this page (*visually*) has as powerful a kick—emotional as well as physical—as the Wolverine six-pager.

The thing that, to me, makes these two vignettes (the Wolverine story and the one-pager) epitomize what makes this Canon so much fun for me. They aren't about events, they're about characters.

As always in those days with the cast of this core X-title, the stories at their essence come down to character. The events themselves are, fingers crossed, dynamically edge-of-the-seat exciting but the stories themselves are about the *people*: nine heroes walking the lonely path of fate.

What will Ororo do to regain her lost abilities—and will that goal be worth the necessary price? She had been alone since she was a little girl. With the X-team, she found true friends; through those friends she found the man she loves. Is the recovery of her mutant abilities worth the possible loss of all that?

Logan, too, is a loner—but thanks to Storm's decision he finds himself leader of the team. Can he handle that? Can they handle him as their functional boss?

Psylocke is the newest arrival to the group and while on one level—her own personal confrontation with Sabretooth—she's proven her right to be here, she still has doubts. She's as nervous about reaching into her friends' minds as they are for her to visit.

Dazzler in so many ways wants to be *anywhere* but here. She had so many options as a youngster but only one true desire. From the very beginning of her life, she wanted to be a *star*. She had a *voice*; she wanted nothing more than to use it to make audiences cheer. Indeed, among her most dedicated fans is one of the X-Canon's arch adversaries, the Juggernaut. Only—she's also a mutant, whose powers are tied to both sound and light; she absorbs the one to generate the other, with phenomenal intensity. Like it or not, she's a bona-fide hero. This may be the right and necessary fate for her but it'll never be the one she freely chooses.

Havok's been part of this Canon since before the All-New, All-Different X-Men even came into being. His elder brother, Scott Summers (Cyclops), led the team from its inception. He never thought he'd be back here, wearing his battle "armor," fighting super villains and saving the world. He figured on living a happily-ever-after scenario with his sweetie, Lorna Dane. Except—Scott walked out on his wife and Lorna, possessed by the Marauder Malice, now leads that band of villains. Now, Alex Summers feels both gut-punched and lost.

Rogue—used to be a villain, foster-daughter of the key-members of the federal mutant enforcement unit Freedom Force: Mystique and Destiny. Her ability is to absorb the powers and memories of those adversaries she physically touches with her bare skin. With one exception, that absorption is temporary, although a residual trace of each "possessed" psyche remains forever a part of her. The exception is the psyche of Carol Danvers, a.k.a. Ms. Marvel. Her total absorption of Carol's psyche and powers—and the physical and psychic consequences that followed—is what led Mystique to sanction Rogue's turning to Charles Xavier for help. To both her and Mystique's surprise, that proved to be a fateful turn of events. She found true friends and a life she's since come to cherish.

Colossus has been a stalwart member of the X-team from its very beginning. He has been to the far end of the universe and has seen friends die, has hurt them deeply just by speaking his heart. He has learned that plowing a fight and fighting a super-powered adversary is far easier than simply—living. Perhaps that's why he takes refuge with the images he draws in empty pages. His images do no harm; quite the opposite, they bring joy to their beholders. Except that he's a young man of faith—and the faith he embraces is embodied by the simplest of words: "with great power, there must also come great responsibility." His power is obvious; the responsibility, he willingly accepts.

Longshot is something of an anomaly. He's not from around here. He looks human but he isn't. Problem is, he doesn't know *where* he's from, or why he's here. He's very much a lost soul, his actions almost totally coming from instinct. He's with the X-team out of instinct, because it feels—right, in the best sense of the word. And with them, he'll remain, for as long as it feels right.

Madelyne Pryor is another anomaly, a normal woman cast among this band of mutant super heroes. Married to their former leader, Scott Summers, mother of their son, Nathan. Except—Scott walked out on her soon after their son was born to re-join his recently resurrected girlfriend, Jean Grey. Now, she feels very much like a lost soul.

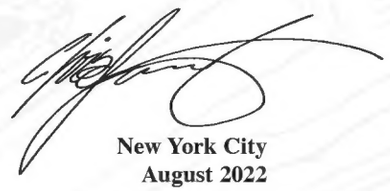
Over the course of this *Masterworks*, each of these characters faces challenges galore, choices to match. Sometimes, it's a simple challenge, to save lives. Others, to save all of creation. Sometimes, a quest to find the man she loves. Others, to face the consequences of that decision. More than once, they risk their lives to defend others. And ultimately, to make the supreme sacrifice. They find themselves in conflict with heroes they admire and with whom in the past they've fought beside. They walk a path they know is lonely but one which is also necessary for the common good.

They have no guarantee of success; indeed, many times, the "certain" outcome appears to be quite the opposite. But if they don't make these choices, then who?

That's their hallmark, from the beginning. Whatever the cost, for the common good, they have to find a way to win.

The path they choose to walk is never easy. That the people they're fighting for choose to fear and hate them is an unfair part of their reality. But one they've always chosen freely to accept.

Because they're heroes.



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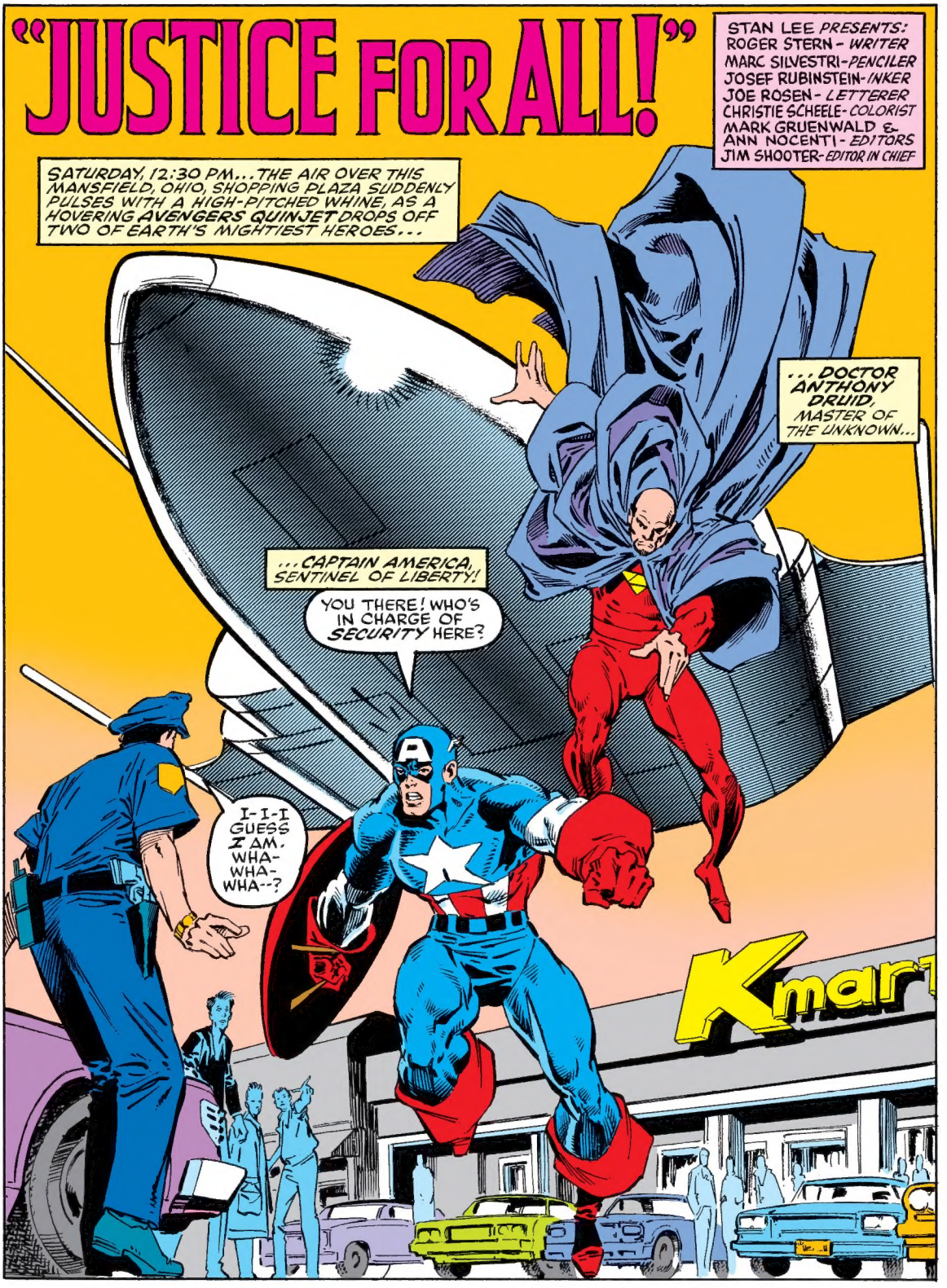
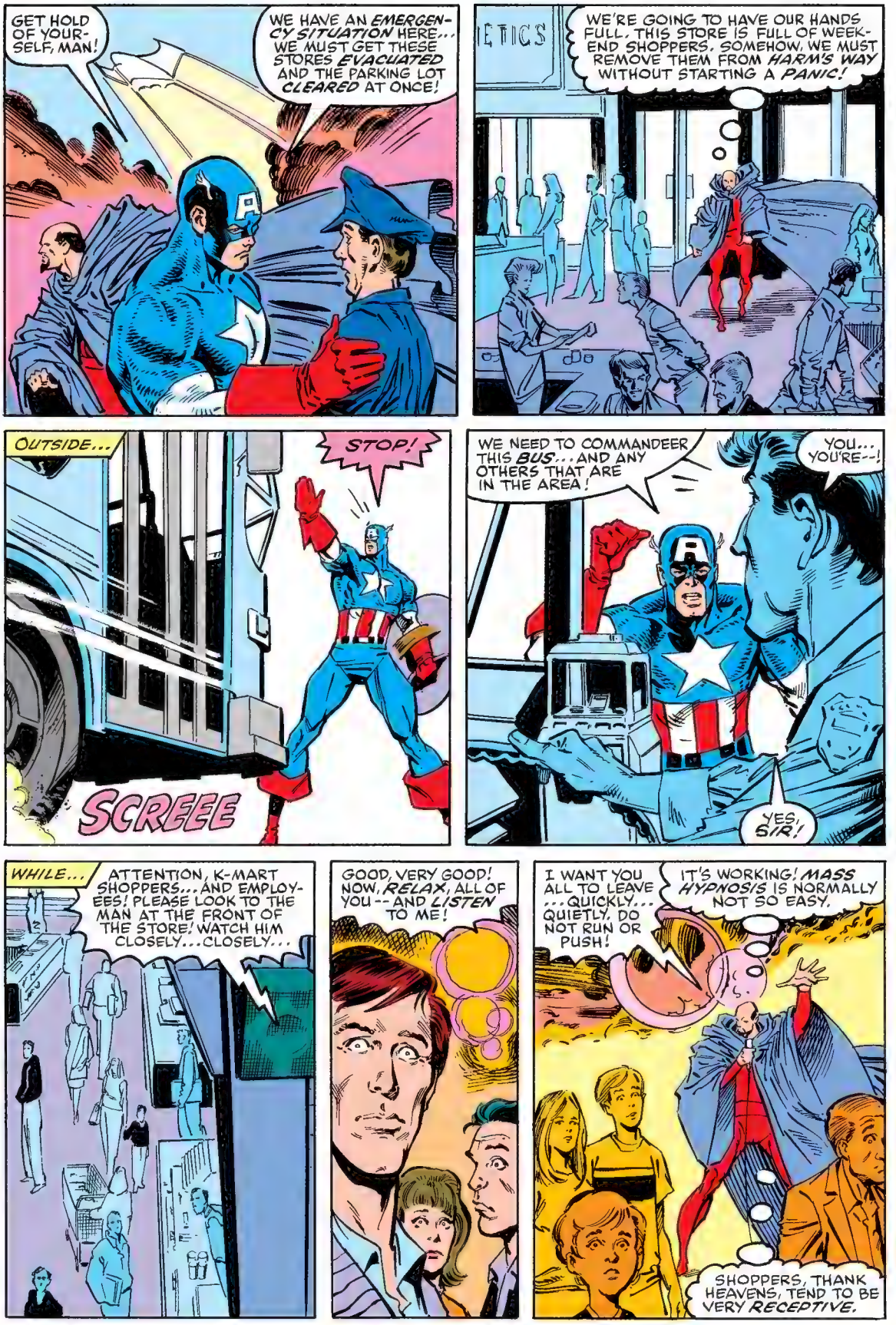
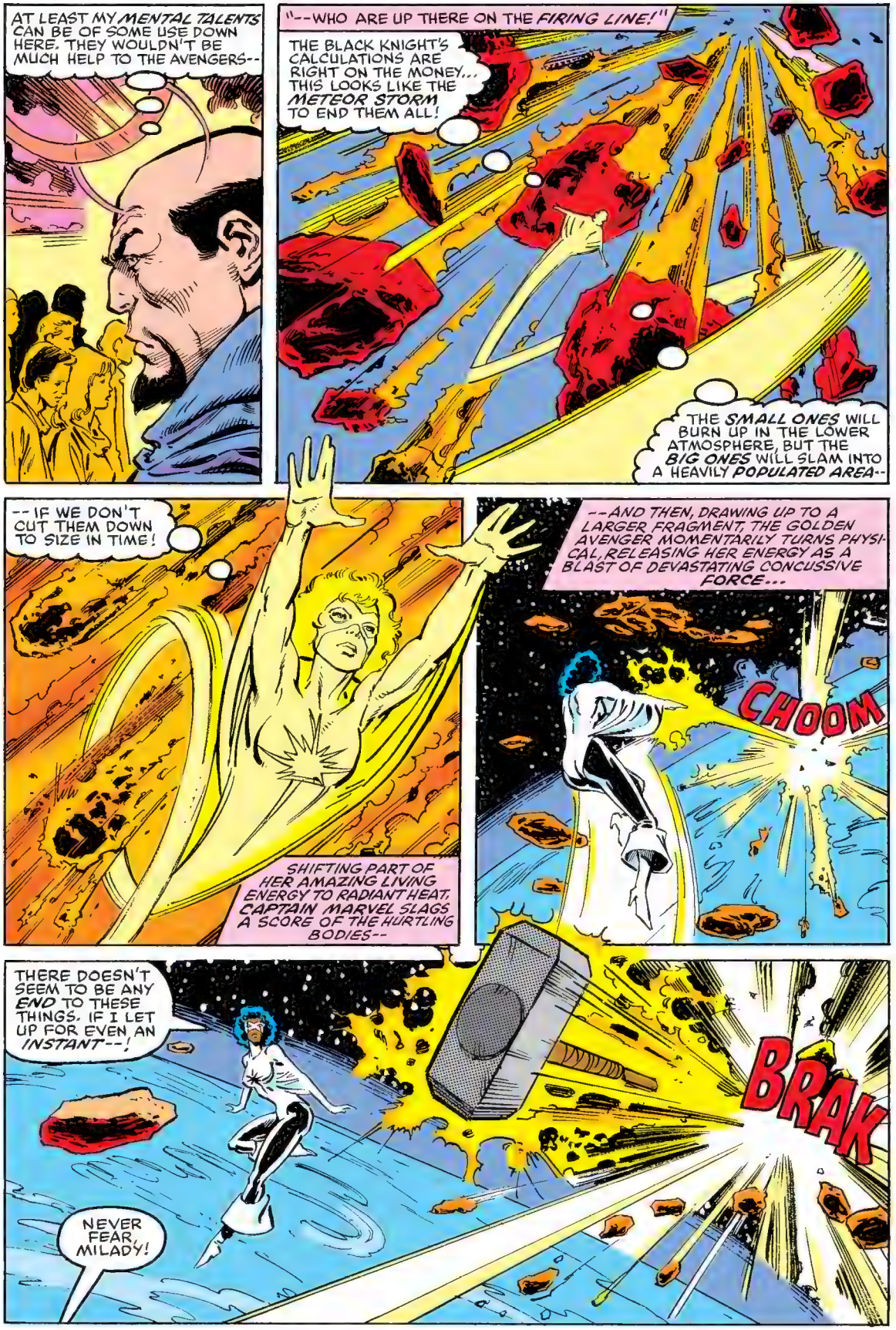
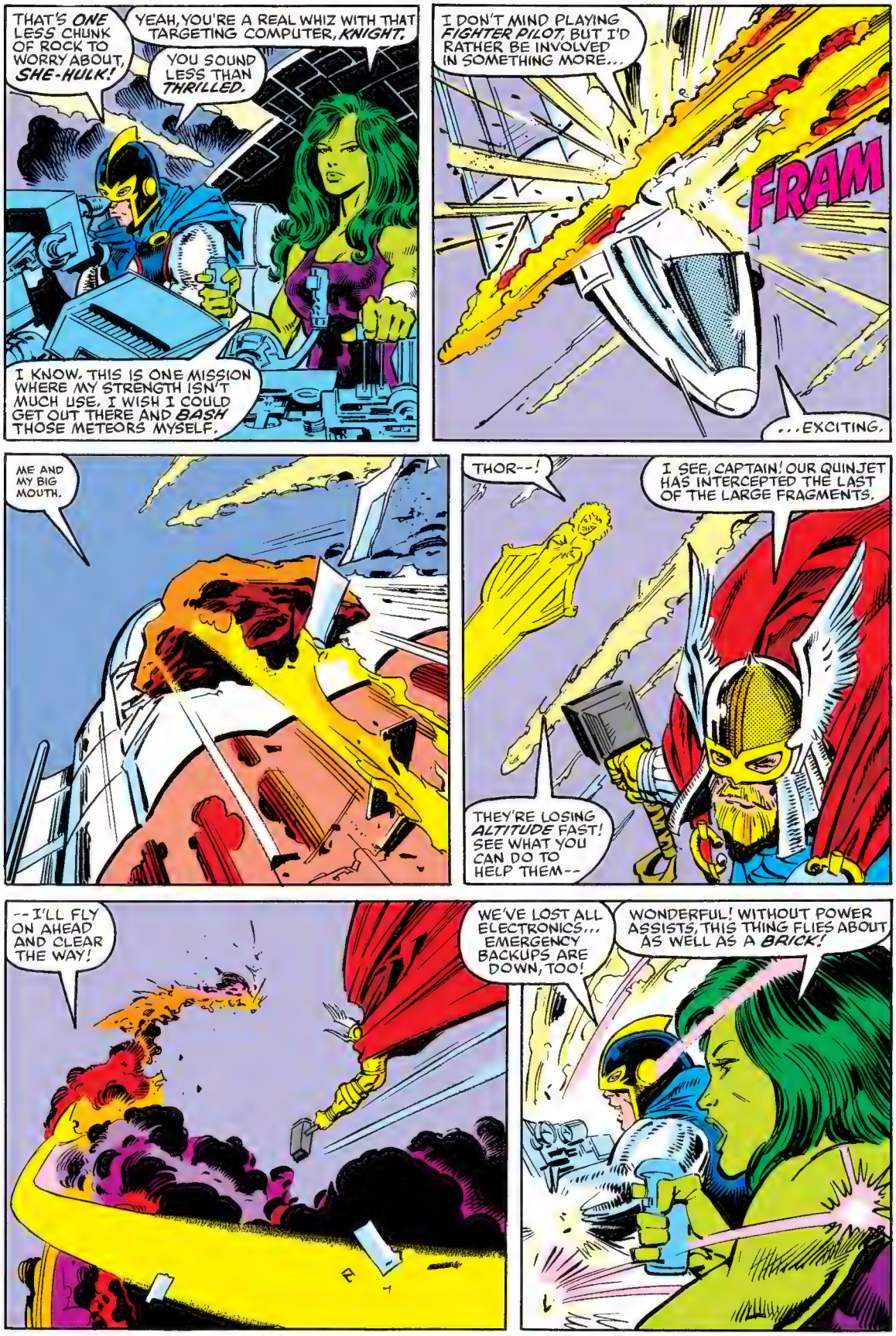
THE X-MEN VS. THE AVENGERS

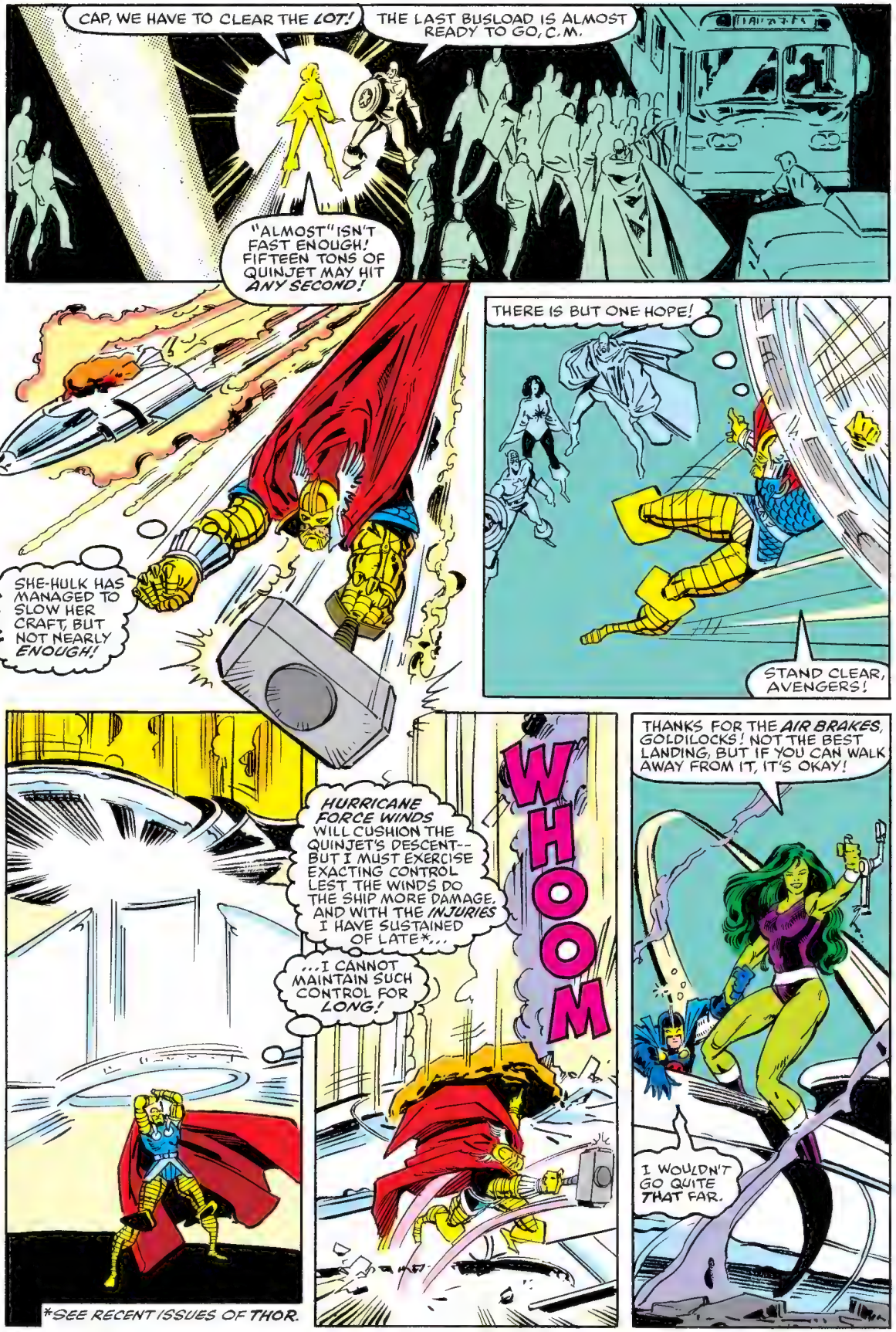

"JUSTICE FOR ALL!"
STAN LEE PRESENTS:
ROGER STERN - WRITER
MARC SILVESTRI - PENCILER
JOSEF RUBINSTEIN - INKER
JOE ROSEN - LETTERER
CHRISTIE SCHEELE - COLORIST
MARK GRUENWALD & ANN NOCENTI - EDITORS
JIM SHOOTER - EDITOR IN CHIEF
SATURDAY, 12:30 PM... THE AIR OVER THIS MANSFIELD, OHIO, SHOPPING PLAZA SUDDENLY PULSES WITH A HIGH-PITCHED WHINE, AS A HOVERING AVENGERS QUINJET DROPS OFF TWO OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES...
...DOCTOR ANTHONY DRUID, MASTER OF THE UNKNOWN...
...CAPTAIN AMERICA, SENTINEL OF LIBERTY!
YOU THERE! WHO'S IN CHARGE OF SECURITY HERE?
I-I-I GUESS I AM. WHA-WHA-WHA--?
Kmart


GET HOLD OF YOURSELF, MAN!
WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY SITUATION HERE... WE MUST GET THESE STORES EVACUATED AND THE PARKING LOT CLEARED AT ONCE!
ETICS
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE OUR HANDS FULL. THIS STORE IS FULL OF WEEKEND SHOPPERS. SOMEHOW, WE MUST REMOVE THEM FROM HARM'S WAY WITHOUT STARTING A PANIC!
OUTSIDE...
STOP!
SCREEE
WE NEED TO COMMANDEER THIS BUS... AND ANY OTHERS THAT ARE IN THE AREA!
YOU... YOU'RE--!
YES, SIR!
WHILE...
ATTENTION, K-MART SHOPPERS... AND EMPLOYEES! PLEASE LOOK TO THE MAN AT THE FRONT OF THE STORE! WATCH HIM CLOSELY... CLOSELY...
GOOD, VERY GOOD! NOW, RELAX, ALL OF YOU -- AND LISTEN TO ME!
I WANT YOU ALL TO LEAVE ... QUICKLY... QUIETLY. DO NOT RUN OR PUSH!
IT'S WORKING! MASS HYPNOSIS IS NORMALLY NOT SO EASY.
SHOPPERS, THANK HEAVENS, TEND TO BE VERY RECEPTIVE.


AT LEAST MY MENTAL TALENTS CAN BE OF SOME USE DOWN HERE. THEY WOULDN'T BE MUCH HELP TO THE AVENGERS--
"--WHO ARE UP THERE ON THE FIRING LINE!"
THE BLACK KNIGHT'S CALCULATIONS ARE RIGHT ON THE MONEY... THIS LOOKS LIKE THE METEOR STORM TO END THEM ALL!
THE SMALL ONES WILL BURN UP IN THE LOWER ATMOSPHERE, BUT THE BIG ONES WILL SLAM INTO A HEAVILY POPULATED AREA--
--IF WE DON'T CUT THEM DOWN TO SIZE IN TIME!
SHIFTING PART OF HER AMAZING LIVING ENERGY TO RADIANT HEAT, CAPTAIN MARVEL SLAGS A SCORE OF THE HURTLING BODIES--
--AND THEN, DRAWING UP TO A LARGER FRAGMENT, THE GOLDEN AVENGER MOMENTARILY TURNS PHYSICAL, RELEASING HER ENERGY AS A BLAST OF DEVASTATING CONCUSSIVE FORCE...
CHOOM
THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY END TO THESE THINGS. IF I LET UP FOR EVEN AN INSTANT--!
BRAK
NEVER FEAR, MILADY!

THE CALL HAS GONE OUT... AVENGERS ASSEMBLE...
...AND ONCE AGAIN, THE MIGHTY THOR HAS ANSWERED!
IF THESE METEORS POSE A DANGER TO THE PEOPLE OF MIDGARD,* THEN--BY MY HAMMER--THEY SHALL BE NO MORE!
*EARTH.
BARROOMM
LET THE HEAVENS RESOUND WITH THE FIRE AND FURY OF THE STORM!
LET THE LIGHTNING NOT CEASE UNTIL THE THUNDER GOD SAYS, "ENOW!"
JUST A FEW HUNDRED YARDS AWAY...
FROM THE WAY THAT STORM BLEW UP, THOR MUST'VE BEATEN US HERE!
NO KIDDING!
LOOK ALIVE, DANE! BOGEYS AT 12 O'CLOCK!
CHECK, PULSE-BLASTER DEPLOYING...
...AND READY, FIRE!
BEEYOW

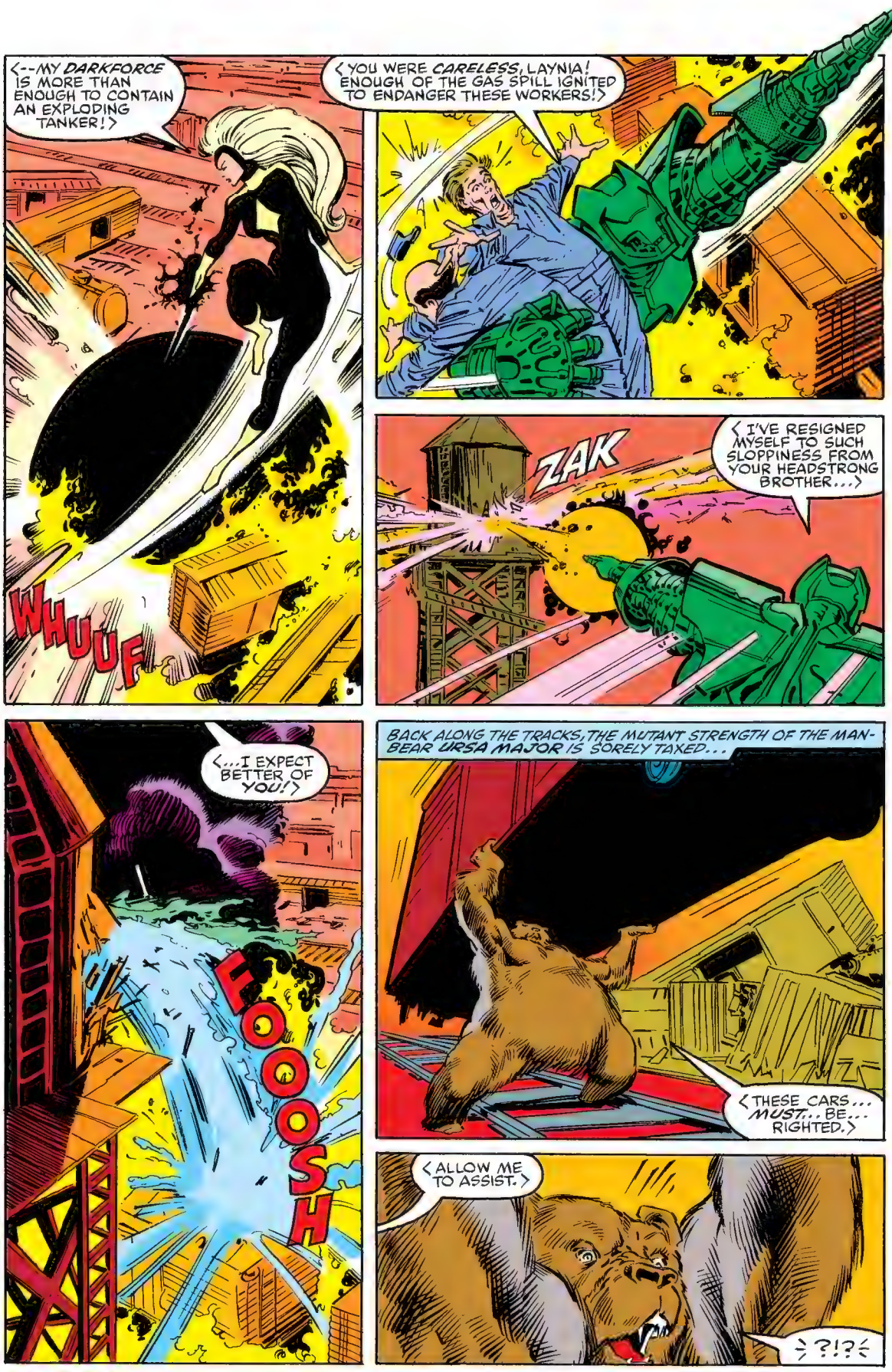

THAT'S ONE LESS CHUNK OF ROCK TO WORRY ABOUT, SHE-HULK!
YEAH, YOU'RE A REAL WHIZ WITH THAT TARGETING COMPUTER, KNIGHT.
YOU SOUND LESS THAN THRILLED.
I KNOW. THIS IS ONE MISSION WHERE MY STRENGTH ISN'T MUCH USE. I WISH I COULD GET OUT THERE AND BASH THOSE METEORS MYSELF.
I DON'T MIND PLAYING FIGHTER PILOT, BUT I'D RATHER BE INVOLVED IN SOMETHING MORE...
FRAM
...EXCITING.
ME AND MY BIG MOUTH.
THOR--!
I SEE, CAPTAIN! OUR QUINJET HAS INTERCEPTED THE LAST OF THE LARGE FRAGMENTS.
THEY'RE LOSING ALTITUDE FAST! SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP THEM--
--I'LL FLY ON AHEAD AND CLEAR THE WAY!
WE'VE LOST ALL ELECTRONICS... EMERGENCY BACKUPS ARE DOWN, TOO!
WONDERFUL! WITHOUT POWER ASSISTS, THIS THING FLIES ABOUT AS WELL AS A BRICK!

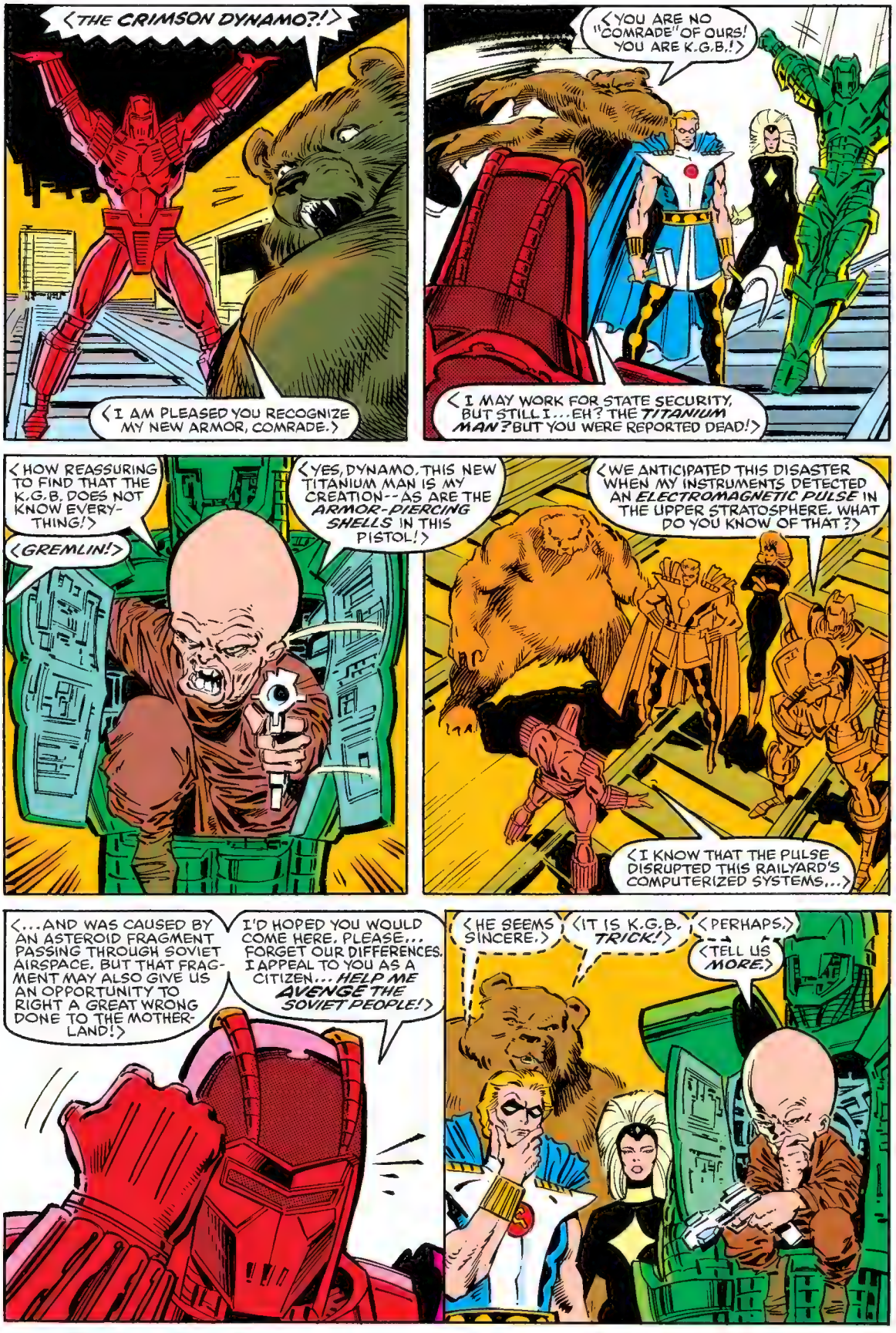

CAP, WE HAVE TO CLEAR THE LOT!
THE LAST BUSLOAD IS ALMOST READY TO GO, C.M.
"ALMOST" ISN'T FAST ENOUGH! FIFTEEN TONS OF QUINJET MAY HIT ANY SECOND!
SHE-HULK HAS MANAGED TO SLOW HER CRAFT, BUT NOT NEARLY ENOUGH!
THERE IS BUT ONE HOPE!
STAND CLEAR, AVENGERS!
HURRICANE FORCE WINDS WILL CUSHION THE QUINJET'S DESCENT-- BUT I MUST EXERCISE EXACTING CONTROL LEST THE WINDS DO THE SHIP MORE DAMAGE. AND WITH THE INJURIES I HAVE SUSTAINED OF LATE*...
...I CANNOT MAINTAIN SUCH CONTROL FOR LONG!
WHOOM
*SEE RECENT ISSUES OF THOR.
THANKS FOR THE AIR BRAKES, GOLDILOCKS! NOT THE BEST LANDING, BUT IF YOU CAN WALK AWAY FROM IT, IT'S OKAY!
I WOULDN'T GO QUITE THAT FAR.

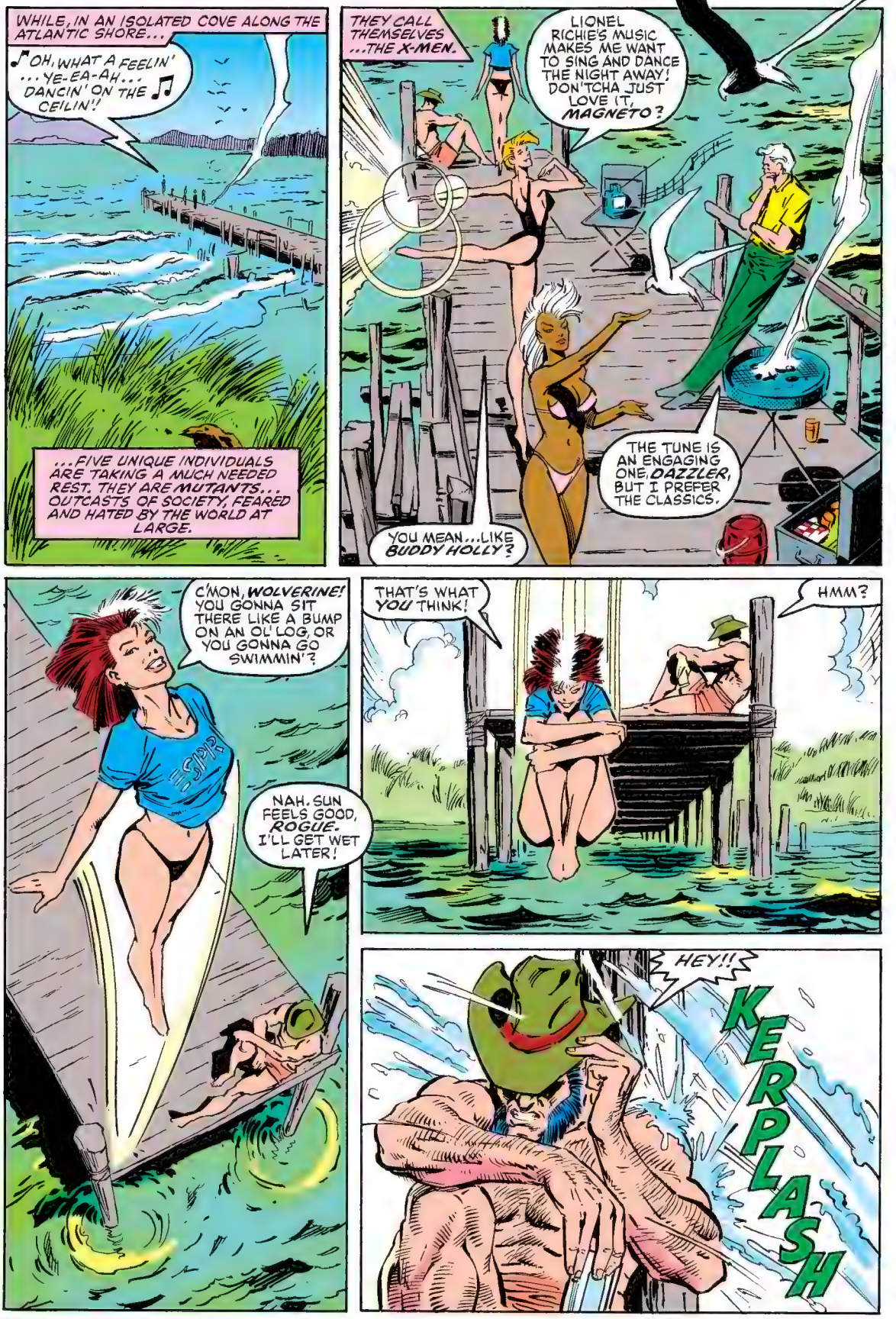
LATER...
WOW! LOOKIT!
WHAT'S SHE DOIN'?
UNGH! THAT'S FUNNY...
...I SHOULD BE ABLE TO LIFT THIS EASY...BUT IT DOESN'T WANT TO BUDGE...LIKE IT'S CRAZY-GLUED TO THE QUINJET!
COME ON, YOU DIRTY--!
ALL RIGHT! FINALLY!
CAN YOU SET IT DOWN OVER HERE, JENNIFER?
SURE. PIECE OF CAKE.
WHAM
WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE, AVENGERS.
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL! THAT ROCK'S NOW FEDERAL PROPERTY.
YOU MAY INSPECT IT FOR THE TIME BEING.
I BELIEVE YOU ALERTED WASHINGTON ABOUT THIS, CAPTAIN?
YES, THE BLACK KNIGHT DETECTED TWO LARGE ASTEROID FRAGMENTS FALLING TO EARTH...ONE THAT WOULD BREAK APART OVER A POPULATED AREA.
YOU'RE CERTAIN THE OTHER FRAGMENT, THE LARGEST ONE, WILL HIT IN KAMPUCHEA? WE'VE ALREADY ALERTED THE SOVIETS AND THE CHINESE... WE DON'T WANT TO LOOK STUPID ON THIS!
RELAX, IT SHOULD IMPACT MILES FROM ANY INHABITED AREA.
HMM... SOMETHING PECULIAR HERE.

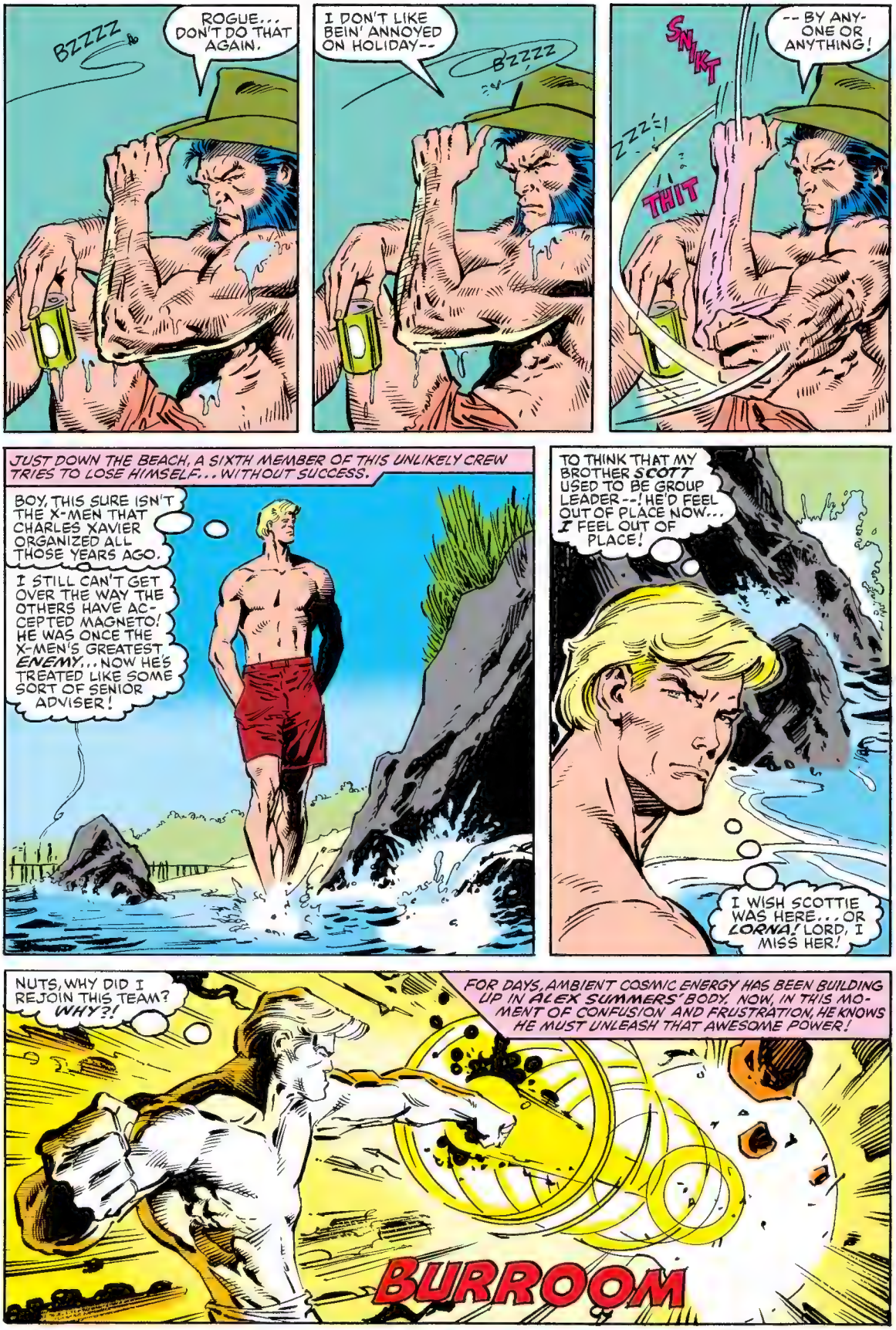
PECULIAR? WHAT DO YOU... MEAN?
IT'S UNUSUALLY MAGNETIC!
WATCH!
SUCH IS THE POWER OF THE BLACK KNIGHT'S ENCHANTED EBONY SWORD THAT A SINGLE SWING CLEAVES A SMALL CHUNK FROM THE METEORITE. AND THEN...
WHUK
FTUNNG
INTERESTING.
HERE'S ANOTHER RIDDLE! THERE'S SOMETHING ON THIS SIDE THAT LOOKS LIKE TOOLED STEEL!
WHAT? LET ME SEE!
THEN, THIS MUST BE... YES! OH, YES! HA-HA!
YOU'VE DONE OUR NATION A GREAT SERVICE, AVENGERS! I CAN'T WAIT TO TELL OUR RUSSIAN FRIENDS ABOUT THIS! HAH-HAH-HA!
A FEW HOURS LATER, IN THE HEART OF THE SOVIET UNION, A GREAT RAILYARD'S AUTOMATIC SWITCHING SYSTEM SUDDENLY, CATASTROPHICALLY MAL-FUNCTIONS--
--CAUSING ONE TRAIN TO DERAIL, AND SENDING ANOTHER HURTLING TOWARD IT!

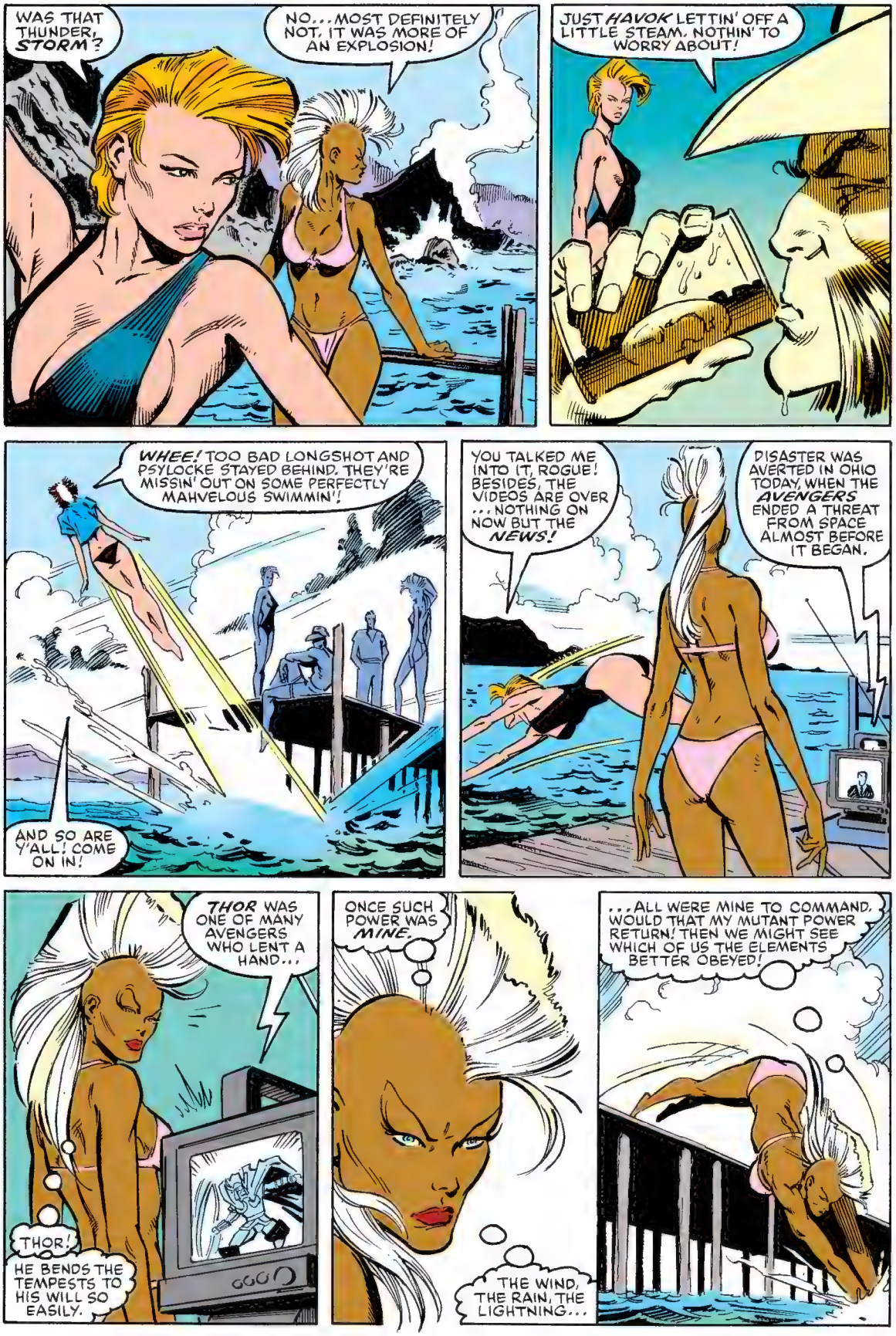
BUT AS THE RUNAWAY TRAIN ROARS TOWARD DISASTER, A BURST OF EBON ENERGY ERUPTS IN THE RAILYARD...
...AND FROM THAT ENERGY-BURST LEAP FOUR ASTOUNDING SUPER-BEINGS KNOWN AS THE SOVIET SUPER-SOLDIERS!
<ONE SIDE, COMRADES! VANGUARD WILL SHOW YOU--> *
* TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN.
<--THAT HE IS MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY MERE LOCOMOTIVE!>
USING HIS HAMMER AND SICKLE AS A FOCUS, VANGUARD CALLS ON HIS EERIE MUTANT POWER TO REPEL ENERGY--
--SENDING THE TRAIN'S KINETIC ENERGY RIPPLING BACK UPON ITSELF...
...WITH LESS THAN IDEAL RESULTS.
ZZT
<DARKSTAR! THAT GASOLINE SPILL--!>
<NOT TO FEAR, TITANIUM MAN...>

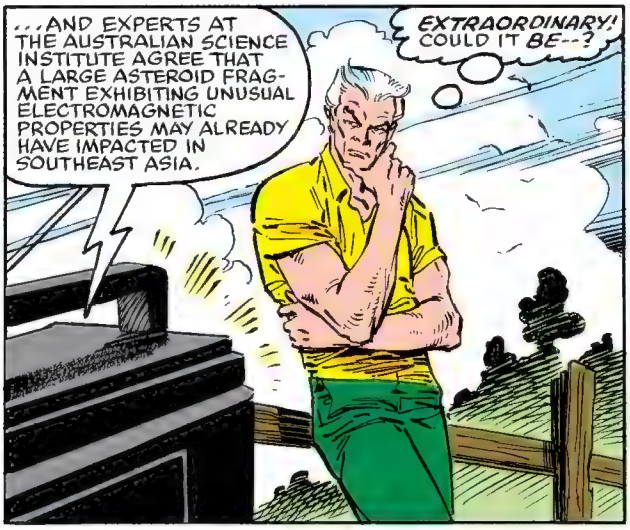

<--MY DARKFORCE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO CONTAIN AN EXPLODING TANKER!>
WHUUF
<YOU WERE CARELESS, LAYNIA! ENOUGH OF THE GAS SPILL IGNITED TO ENDANGER THESE WORKERS!>
ZAK
<I'VE RESIGNED MYSELF TO SUCH SLOPPINESS FROM YOUR HEADSTRONG BROTHER...>
<...I EXPECT BETTER OF YOU!>
LOOOSH
BACK ALONG THE TRACKS, THE MUTANT STRENGTH OF THE MAN-BEAR URSA MAJOR IS SORELY TAXED...
<THESE CARS... MUST... BE... RIGHTED.>
<ALLOW ME TO ASSIST.>
?!?

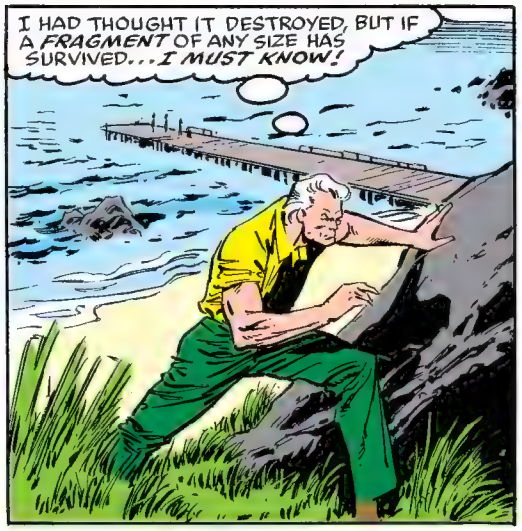

〈THE CRIMSON DYNAMO?!〉
〈I AM PLEASED YOU RECOGNIZE MY NEW ARMOR, COMRADE.〉
〈YOU ARE NO "COMRADE" OF OURS! YOU ARE K.G.B.!〉
〈I MAY WORK FOR STATE SECURITY, BUT STILL I...EH? THE TITANIUM MAN? BUT YOU WERE REPORTED DEAD!〉
〈HOW REASSURING TO FIND THAT THE K.G.B. DOES NOT KNOW EVERY-THING!〉
〈GREMLIN!〉
〈YES, DYNAMO, THIS NEW TITANIUM MAN IS MY CREATION--AS ARE THE ARMOR-PIERCING SHELLS IN THIS PISTOL!〉
〈WE ANTICIPATED THIS DISASTER WHEN MY INSTRUMENTS DETECTED AN ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE IN THE UPPER STRATOSPHERE. WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF THAT?〉
〈I KNOW THAT THE PULSE DISRUPTED THIS RAILYARD'S COMPUTERIZED SYSTEMS...〉
〈...AND WAS CAUSED BY AN ASTEROID FRAGMENT PASSING THROUGH SOVIET AIRSPACE. BUT THAT FRAG-MENT MAY ALSO GIVE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO RIGHT A GREAT WRONG DONE TO THE MOTHER-LAND!〉
I'D HOPED YOU WOULD COME HERE, PLEASE... FORGET OUR DIFFERENCES. I APPEAL TO YOU AS A CITIZEN... HELP ME AVENGE THE SOVIET PEOPLE!〉
〈HE SEEMS SINCERE.〉
〈IT IS K.G.B. TRICK!〉
〈PERHAPS,〉
〈TELL US MORE.〉

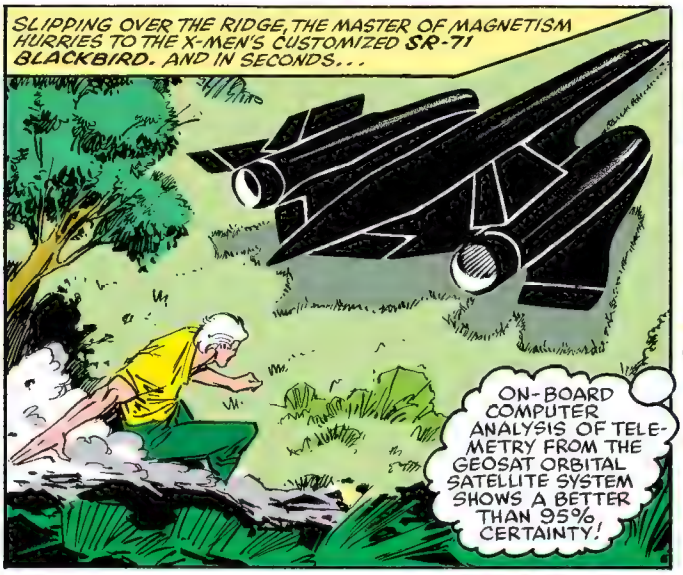

WHILE, IN AN ISOLATED COVE ALONG THE ATLANTIC SHORE...
♪ OH, WHAT A FEELIN' ...YE-EA-AH... DANCIN' ON THE CEILIN'! ♫
...FIVE UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS ARE TAKING A MUCH NEEDED REST. THEY ARE MUTANTS... OUTCASTS OF SOCIETY, FEARED AND HATED BY THE WORLD AT LARGE.
THEY CALL THEMSELVES ...THE X-MEN.
LIONEL RICHIE'S MUSIC MAKES ME WANT TO SING AND DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY! DON'TCHA JUST LOVE IT, MAGNETO?
THE TUNE IS AN ENGAGING ONE, DAZZLER, BUT I PREFER THE CLASSICS.
YOU MEAN...LIKE BUDDY HOLLY?
C'MON, WOLVERINE! YOU GONNA SIT THERE LIKE A BUMP ON AN OL' LOG, OR YOU GONNA GO SWIMMIN'?
NAH. SUN FEELS GOOD, ROGUE. I'LL GET WET LATER!
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK!
HMM?
HEY!!
KERPLASH

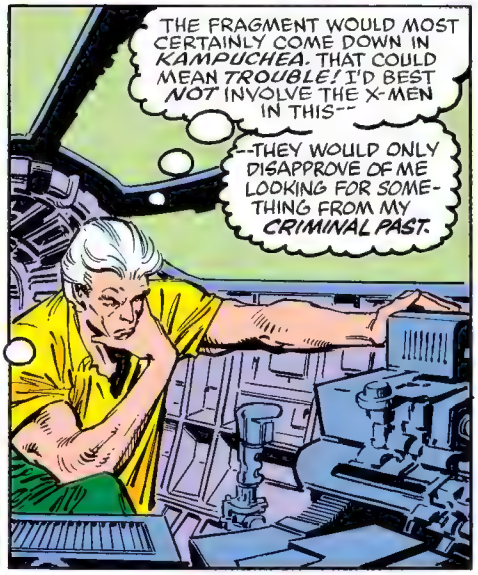

BZZZZ
ROGUE... DON'T DO THAT AGAIN.
I DON'T LIKE BEIN' ANNOYED ON HOLIDAY--
BZZZZ
SNIKT
ZZZ-!
THIT
-- BY ANY-ONE OR ANYTHING!
JUST DOWN THE BEACH, A SIXTH MEMBER OF THIS UNLIKELY CREW TRIES TO LOSE HIMSELF... WITHOUT SUCCESS.
BOY, THIS SURE ISN'T THE X-MEN THAT CHARLES XAVIER ORGANIZED ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.
I STILL CAN'T GET OVER THE WAY THE OTHERS HAVE ACCEPTED MAGNETO! HE WAS ONCE THE X-MEN'S GREATEST ENEMY... NOW HE'S TREATED LIKE SOME SORT OF SENIOR ADVISER!
TO THINK THAT MY BROTHER SCOTT USED TO BE GROUP LEADER--! HE'D FEEL OUT OF PLACE NOW... I FEEL OUT OF PLACE!
I WISH SCOTTIE WAS HERE... OR LORNA! LORD, I MISS HER!
NUTS, WHY DID I REJOIN THIS TEAM? WHY?!
FOR DAYS, AMBIENT COSMIC ENERGY HAS BEEN BUILDING UP IN ALEX SUMMERS' BODY. NOW, IN THIS MOMENT OF CONFUSION AND FRUSTRATION, HE KNOWS HE MUST UNLEASH THAT AWESOME POWER!
BURROOM


WAS THAT THUNDER, STORM?
NO... MOST DEFINITELY NOT. IT WAS MORE OF AN EXPLOSION!
JUST HAVOK LETTIN' OFF A LITTLE STEAM. NOTHIN' TO WORRY ABOUT!
WHEE! TOO BAD LONGSHOT AND PSYLOCKE STAYED BEHIND. THEY'RE MISSIN' OUT ON SOME PERFECTLY MAHVELOUS SWIMMIN'!
AND SO ARE Y'ALL! COME ON IN!
YOU TALKED ME INTO IT, ROGUE! BESIDES, THE VIDEOS ARE OVER ... NOTHING ON NOW BUT THE NEWS!
DISASTER WAS Aaverted IN OHIO TODAY, WHEN THE AVENGERS ENDED A THREAT FROM SPACE ALMOST BEFORE IT BEGAN.
THOR WAS ONE OF MANY AVENGERS WHO LENT A HAND...
THOR! HE BENDS THE TEMPESTS TO HIS WILL SO EASILY.
ONCE SUCH POWER WAS MINE.
THE WIND, THE RAIN, THE LIGHTNING...
...ALL WERE MINE TO COMMAND. WOULD THAT MY MUTANT POWER RETURN! THEN WE MIGHT SEE WHICH OF US THE ELEMENTS BETTER OBEYED!


...AND EXPERTS AT THE AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE INSTITUTE AGREE THAT A LARGE ASTEROID FRAGMENT EXHIBITING UNUSUAL ELECTROMAGNETIC PROPERTIES MAY ALREADY HAVE IMPACTED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.
EXTRAORDINARY! COULD IT BE--?

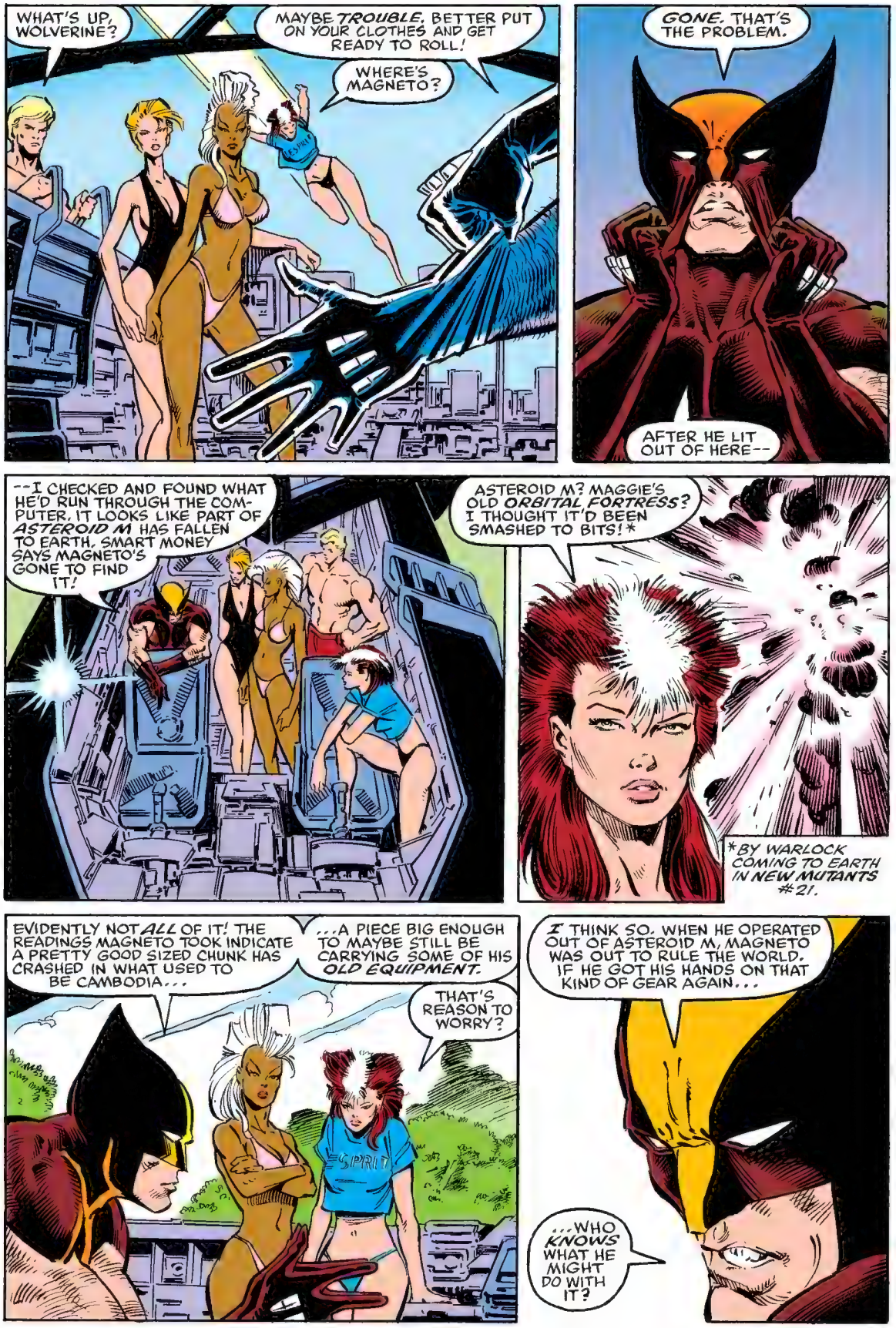

I HAD THOUGHT IT DESTROYED, BUT IF A FRAGMENT OF ANY SIZE HAS SURVIVED... I MUST KNOW!


SLIPPING OVER THE RIDGE, THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM HURRIES TO THE X-MEN'S CUSTOMIZED SR-71 BLACKBIRD. AND IN SECONDS...
ON-BOARD COMPUTER ANALYSIS OF TELEMETRY FROM THE GEOSAT ORBITAL SATELLITE SYSTEM SHOWS A BETTER THAN 95% CERTAINTY!

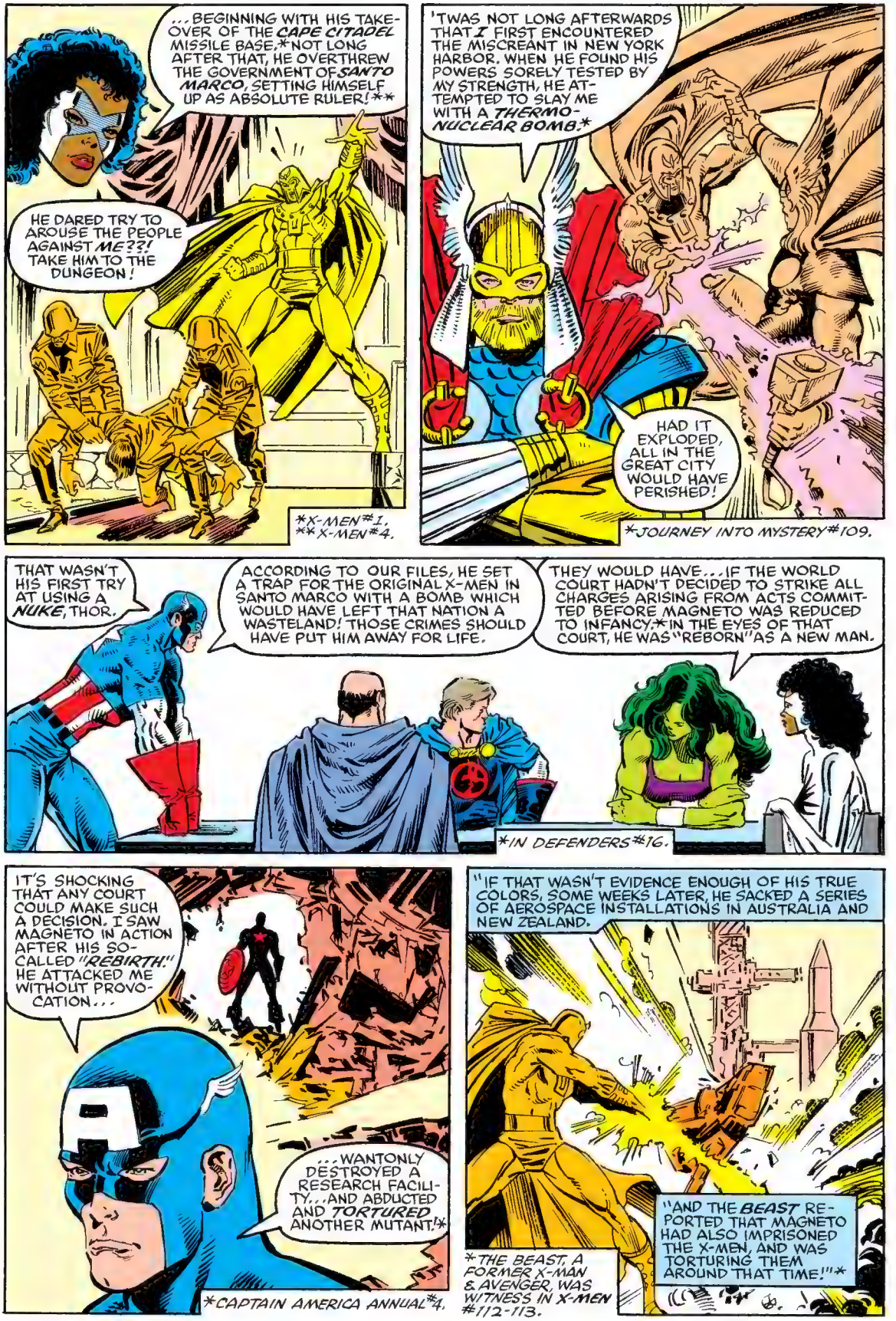

THE FRAGMENT WOULD MOST CERTAINLY COME DOWN IN KAMPUCHEA. THAT COULD MEAN TROUBLE! I'D BEST NOT INVOLVE THE X-MEN IN THIS--
--THEY WOULD ONLY DISAPPROVE OF ME LOOKING FOR SOMETHING FROM MY CRIMINAL PAST.

MOMENTS LATER, MAGNETO FORMS A PROTECTIVE MAGNETIC FIELD ABOUT HIMSELF AND STREAKS AWAY INTO THE EARLY EVENING SKIES...

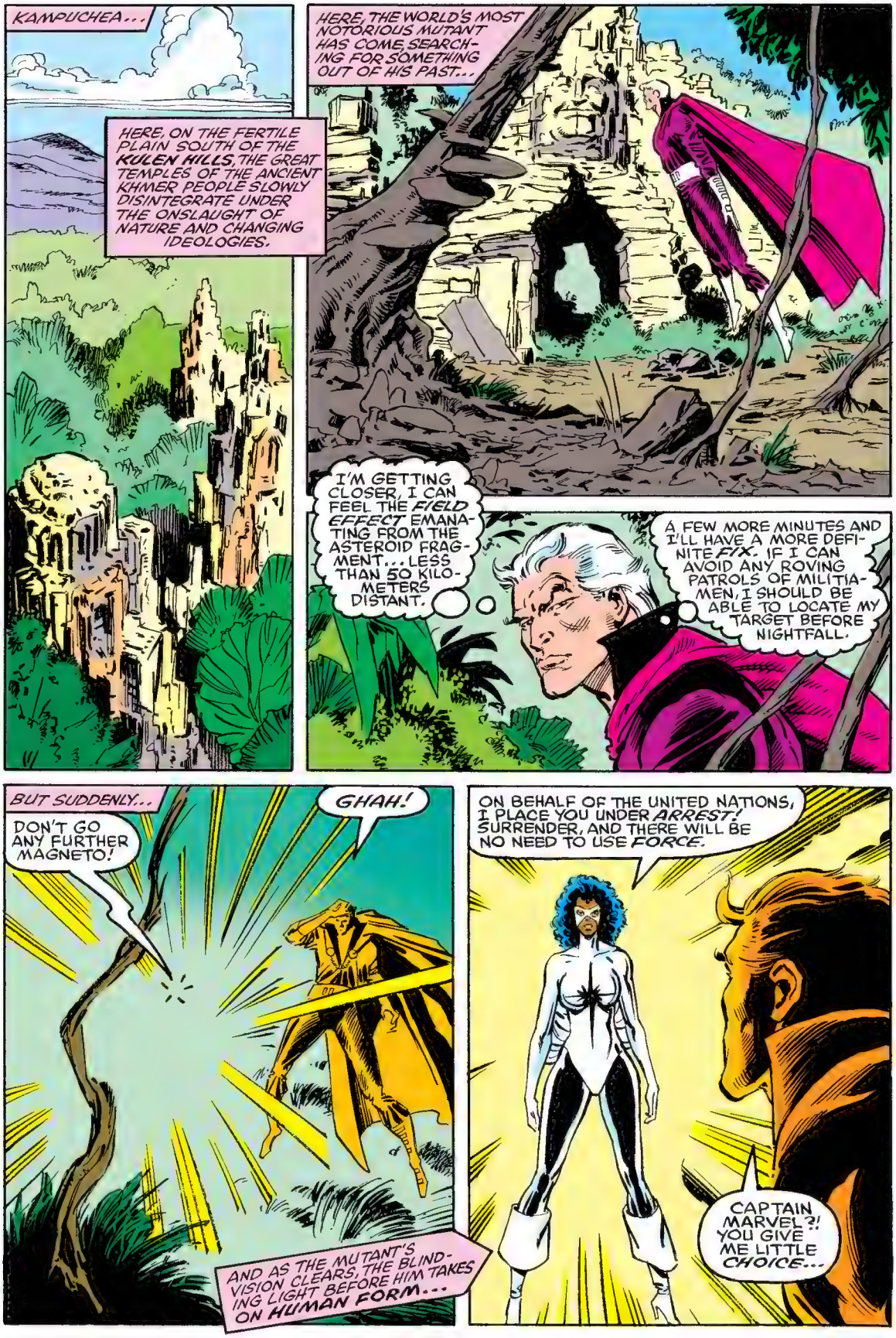
WEEEEEEEE
WHAT?!
ESPRIT
THE BLACKBIRD'S WARNING SIREN! LET US GO!


WHAT'S UP, WOLVERINE?
MAYBE TROUBLE. BETTER PUT ON YOUR CLOTHES AND GET READY TO ROLL!
WHERE'S MAGNETO?
GONE. THAT'S THE PROBLEM.
AFTER HE LIT OUT OF HERE--
--I CHECKED AND FOUND WHAT HE'D RUN THROUGH THE COMPUTER. IT LOOKS LIKE PART OF ASTEROID M HAS FALLEN TO EARTH. SMART MONEY SAYS MAGNETO'S GONE TO FIND IT!
ASTEROID M? MAGGIE'S OLD ORBITAL FORTRESS? I THOUGHT IT'D BEEN SMASHED TO BITS!*
*BY WARLOCK COMING TO EARTH IN NEW MUTANTS #21.
EVIDENTLY NOT ALL OF IT! THE READINGS MAGNETO TOOK INDICATE A PRETTY GOOD SIZED CHUNK HAS CRASHED IN WHAT USED TO BE CAMBODIA...
...A PIECE BIG ENOUGH TO MAYBE STILL BE CARRYING SOME OF HIS OLD EQUIPMENT.
THAT'S REASON TO WORRY?
I THINK SO. WHEN HE OPERATED OUT OF ASTEROID M, MAGNETO WAS OUT TO RULE THE WORLD. IF HE GOT HIS HANDS ON THAT KIND OF GEAR AGAIN...
...WHO KNOWS WHAT HE MIGHT DO WITH IT?

SOON, AT THE AVENGERS' HYDROBASE HEADQUARTERS...
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO LEARN, CAP?
ENOUGH TO TURN MY STOMACH, MARVEL. MY PERSONAL CONTACTS IN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY SAY THAT THE NSC THINKS THE FRAGMENTS WHICH FELL TO EARTH WERE PART OF AN ORBITAL BASE ONCE USED BY MAGNETO!
THEY'VE LET THE CIA SHARE THIS DISCOVERY WITH THE KGB... AND THEY'VE LEAKED JUST ENOUGH INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA TO DRAW MAGNETO'S ATTENTION.
THERE'S BEEN A HIGH-LEVEL DECISION IN THE KREMLIN TO TERMINATE MAGNETO... AND PEOPLE IN OUR GOVERNMENT ARE HELPING TO BAIT A TRAP!
YOU'RE SAYING THAT U.S. INTELLIGENCE IS PLAYING FOOTSIE WITH THE SOVIETS TO PLOT AN ASSASSINATION?
IT'S NOT BEYOND SOME AGENCIES, DANE.
THERE ARE FAR TOO MANY BUREAUS WHICH OPERATE OUTSIDE THE LAW.
THOUGH I CAN UNDERSTAND THE DESIRE TO BE RID OF A WORLD-CLASS MENACE LIKE MAGNETO.
MANY HAVE BEEN THE CRIMES OF MAGNETO, BUT THERE IS NO HONOR IN SUCH AN AMBUSH.
I'M AFRAID I'M WOEFULLY IGNORANT OF MAGNETO'S RECORD. I TAKE IT THE REST OF YOU HAVE MET THE MAN?
AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, DOCTOR, AND THEY HAVEN'T BEEN PLEASANT EXPERIENCES, MAGNETO HAS HAD QUITE AN INFAMOUS HISTORY...


...BEGINNING WITH HIS TAKE-OVER OF THE CAPE CITADEL MISSILE BASE,* NOT LONG AFTER THAT, HE OVERTHREW THE GOVERNMENT OF SANTO MARCO, SETTING HIMSELF UP AS ABSOLUTE RULER!**
HE DARED TRY TO AROUSE THE PEOPLE AGAINST ME??! TAKE HIM TO THE DUNGEON!
*X-MEN #1.
**X-MEN #4.
'TWAS NOT LONG AFTERWARDS THAT I FIRST ENCOUNTERED THE MISCREANT IN NEW YORK HARBOR. WHEN HE FOUND HIS POWERS SORELY TESTED BY MY STRENGTH, HE ATTEMPTED TO SLAY ME WITH A THERMO-NUCLEAR BOMB.*
HAD IT EXPLODED, ALL IN THE GREAT CITY WOULD HAVE PERISHED!
*JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #109.
THAT WASN'T HIS FIRST TRY AT USING A NUKE, THOR.
ACCORDING TO OUR FILES, HE SET A TRAP FOR THE ORIGINAL X-MEN IN SANTO MARCO WITH A BOMB WHICH WOULD HAVE LEFT THAT NATION A WASTELAND! THOSE CRIMES SHOULD HAVE PUT HIM AWAY FOR LIFE.
THEY WOULD HAVE...IF THE WORLD COURT HADN'T DECIDED TO STRIKE ALL CHARGES ARISING FROM ACTS COMMITTED BEFORE MAGNETO WAS REDUCED TO INFANCY.* IN THE EYES OF THAT COURT, HE WAS "REBORN" AS A NEW MAN.
*IN DEFENDERS #16.
IT'S SHOCKING THAT ANY COURT COULD MAKE SUCH A DECISION. I SAW MAGNETO IN ACTION AFTER HIS SO-CALLED "REBIRTH." HE ATTACKED ME WITHOUT PROVOCATION...
...WANTONLY DESTROYED A RESEARCH FACILITY...AND ABDUCTED AND TORTURED ANOTHER MUTANT!*
*CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #4.
"IF THAT WASN'T EVIDENCE ENOUGH OF HIS TRUE COLORS, SOME WEEKS LATER, HE SACKED A SERIES OF AEROSPACE INSTALLATIONS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.
"AND THE BEAST REPORTED THAT MAGNETO HAD ALSO IMPRISONED THE X-MEN, AND WAS TORTURING THEM AROUND THAT TIME!"*
*THE BEAST, A FORMER X-MAN & AVENGER, WAS WITNESS IN X-MEN #112-113.

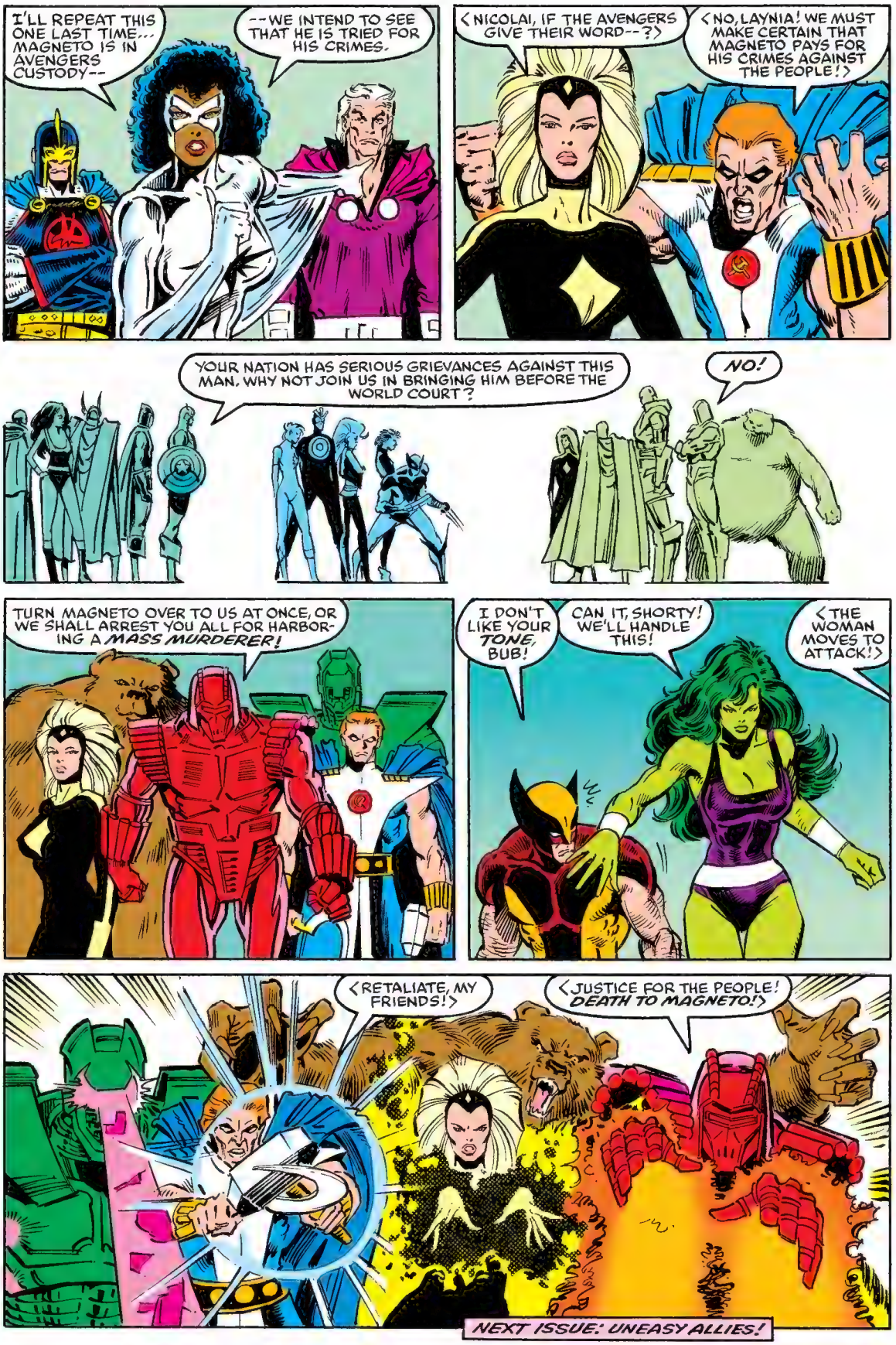
IF THAT STILL WASN'T ENOUGH TO CONVICT MAGNETO, WHAT HE DID TO THE RUSSIANS SHOULD HAVE BEEN!
I RECALL HEARING ABOUT THAT, DIDN'T HE WRECK A SUBMARINE?
WRECK IT? HE SANK ONE AT SEA, KILLING ALL ABOARD!
"AND THEN, HE USED HIS CONTROL OF MAGNETISM TO CREATE A VOLCANO IN THE MIDDLE OF VARYKINO...DESTROYING THE ENTIRE CITY!"*
*IN X-MEN #150.
AFTER THE WAY MAGNETO SKIPPED OUT ON HIS TRIAL* I CAN SEE WHY THE SOVIETS WOULD BE OUT FOR BLOOD.
YES, THEY'RE VERY SERIOUS ABOUT THIS. MY SOURCES SAY THEIR SUPER-SOLDIER TEAM MAY BE ENLISTED TO GET MAGNETO.
*X-MEN #200.
SO...WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
I GET THE FEELING OUR SPY-BOYS WOULD RATHER WE DO NOTHING.
MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST SIT TIGHT AND LET THE SOVIETS TAKE HIM.
NO! THAT WOULD BE WRONG!
AND WITH THE WHOLE WORLD IN THE GRIP OF ANTI-MUTANT HYSTERIA, AN ASSASSINATION WILL MAKE THINGS WORSE!
I AGREE. THE WORLD WAS CHEATED OUT OF BRINGING ADOLF HITLER TO JUSTICE. WE MUSTN'T BE STOPPED FROM BRINGING MAGNETO TO TRIAL!
EVERY INDIVIDUAL DESERVES A FAIR TRIAL... HUMANITY DESERVES IT.

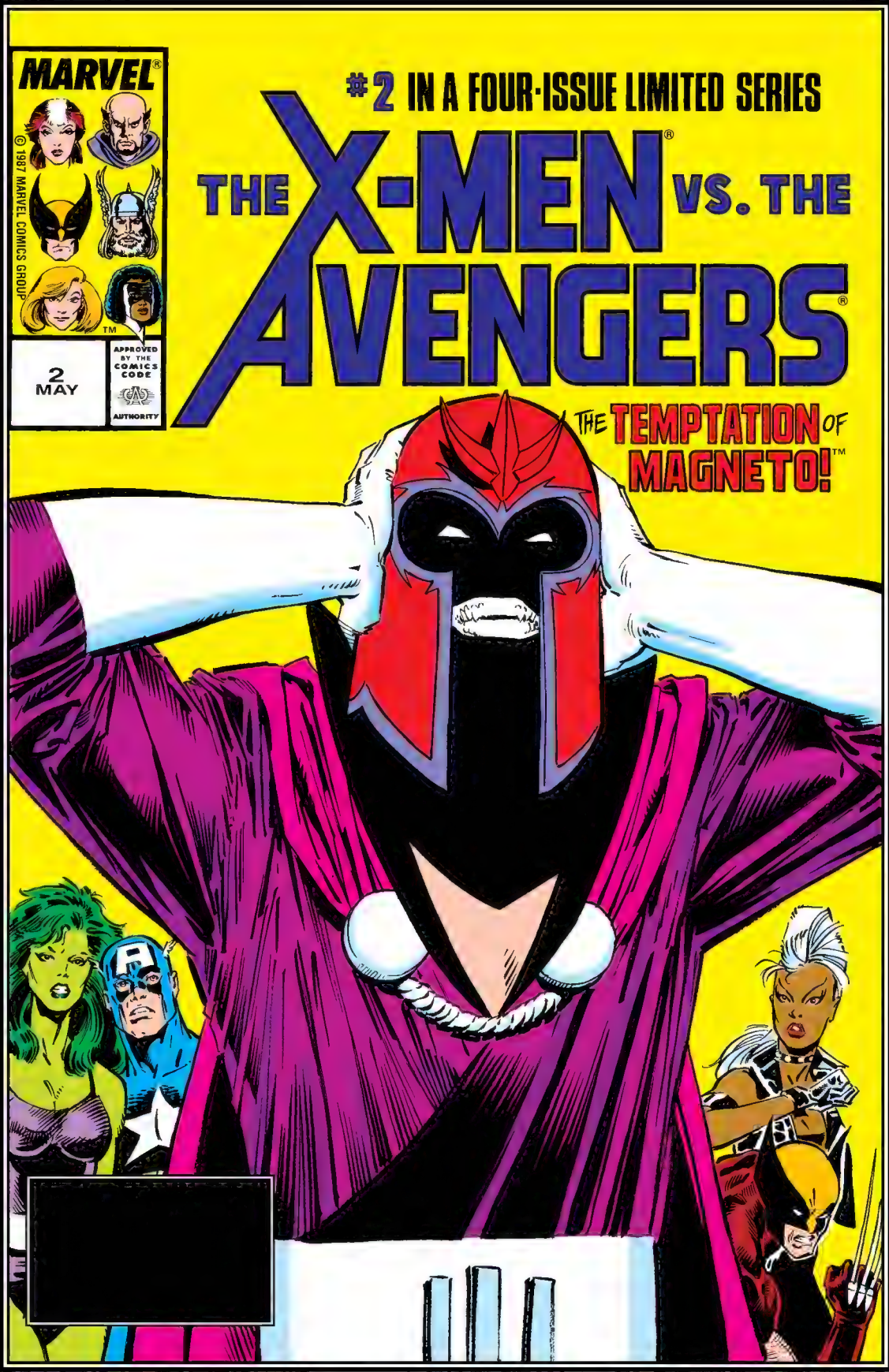

KAMPUCHEA...
HERE, ON THE FERTILE PLAIN SOUTH OF THE KULEN HILLS, THE GREAT TEMPLES OF THE ANCIENT KHMER PEOPLE SLOWLY DISINTEGRATE UNDER THE ONSLAUGHT OF NATURE AND CHANGING IDEOLOGIES.
HERE, THE WORLD'S MOST NOTORIOUS MUTANT HAS COME, SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING OUT OF HIS PAST...
I'M GETTING CLOSER, I CAN FEEL THE FIELD EFFECT EMANATING FROM THE ASTEROID FRAGMENT... LESS THAN 50 KILOMETERS DISTANT.
A FEW MORE MINUTES AND I'LL HAVE A MORE DEFINITE FIX. IF I CAN AVOID ANY ROVING PATROLS OF MILITIAMEN, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO LOCATE MY TARGET BEFORE NIGHTFALL.
BUT SUDDENLY...
DON'T GO ANY FURTHER MAGNETO!
GHAH!
AND AS THE MUTANT'S BLINDVISION CLEARS, THE BLINDING LIGHT BEFORE HIM TAKES ON HUMAN FORM...
ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS, I PLACE YOU UNDER ARREST! SURRENDER, AND THERE WILL BE NO NEED TO USE FORCE.
CAPTAIN MARVEL?! YOU GIVE ME LITTLE CHOICE...

...MY MISSION IS TOO IMPORTANT TO WASTE TIME WITH YOU.
THOUGHT YOU'D KNOCK ME OUT WITH THIS CHUNK OF IRON ORE, RIGHT?
I KNEW IT WOULD BE SAFER TO APPROACH YOU AS A HOLOGRAM!
YOU WERE GIVEN A CHANCE TO COME PEACEABLY, JACKAL--
KLATOOM
--BUT PEACEABLY OR NOT, YOU SHALL BE OUR PRISONER!
THOR, TOO?
AM I RIGHT IN ASSUMING YOU TWO ARE NOT ALONE?
RIGHT AS RAIN, MISTER! IT COST US NO SMALL BIT OF TROUBLE TRACKING YOU DOWN. NOW THAT WE'VE FOUND YOU, WE'RE TAKING YOU BACK BEFORE THE WORLD COURT!

I HAVE NO ARGUMENT WITH YOU AVENGERS! LEAVE ME!
WE CAN'T DO THAT, MAGNETO. THERE'S A MATTER OF JUSTICE TO BE SETTLED!
SELF-RIGHTEOUS FOOLS! YOU FORCE ME TO...TO...
RELAX.
RE... LAX.
IT IS DONE, AVENGERS... THOUGH IT TOOK CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO MENTALLY MASK MY PRESENCE FROM HIM, MAGNETO HAS A STRONG MIND. I CAN'T KEEP HIM ENTHRALLED FOR LONG.
YOU WON'T HAVE TO, DOC. THESE DEGAUSSING MANACLES I WHIPPED UP WILL KEEP HIM AND HIS MAGNETIC POWERS UNDER CONTROL!
ZAK
REAL WRONG, AVENGER!
IF YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH MAGNETO, YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH US!
LET HIM GO!
NO, MAGNETO IS IN OUR CUSTODY ...PROTECTIVE CUSTODY!
BACK OFF, WOLVERINE, DON'T TRY ANYTHING STUPID!

THE ONLY STUPID MOVES ARE MADE BY FOLKS WHO CROSS ME!
CARE TO TRY YOUR LUCK!
WOLVERINE, THIS IS NO TIME TO--!
HOLD IT!
SNIFF SNIFF
WE'RE GETTING MORE COMPANY!
HE'S RIGHT. I SENSE FIVE MINDS...APPROACHING SWIFTLY FROM THE NORTH!
ATTENTION, INTRUDERS! DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE!
WE HAVE COME FOR MAGNETO! DELIVER HIM TO US, AND NO ONE NEED BE HARMED!


I'LL REPEAT THIS ONE LAST TIME... MAGNETO IS IN AVENGERS CUSTODY--
--WE INTEND TO SEE THAT HE IS TRIED FOR HIS CRIMES.
<NICOLAI, IF THE AVENGERS GIVE THEIR WORD--?>
<NO, LAYNIA! WE MUST MAKE CERTAIN THAT MAGNETO PAYS FOR HIS CRIMES AGAINST THE PEOPLE!>
YOUR NATION HAS SERIOUS GRIEVANCES AGAINST THIS MAN. WHY NOT JOIN US IN BRINGING HIM BEFORE THE WORLD COURT?
NO!
TURN MAGNETO OVER TO US AT ONCE, OR WE SHALL ARREST YOU ALL FOR HARBORING A MASS MURDERER!
I DON'T LIKE YOUR TONE, BUB!
CAN IT, SHORTY! WE'LL HANDLE THIS!
<THE WOMAN MOVES TO ATTACK!>
<RETALIATE, MY FRIENDS!>
<JUSTICE FOR THE PEOPLE! DEATH TO MAGNETO!>
NEXT ISSUE: UNEASY ALLIES!


MARVEL
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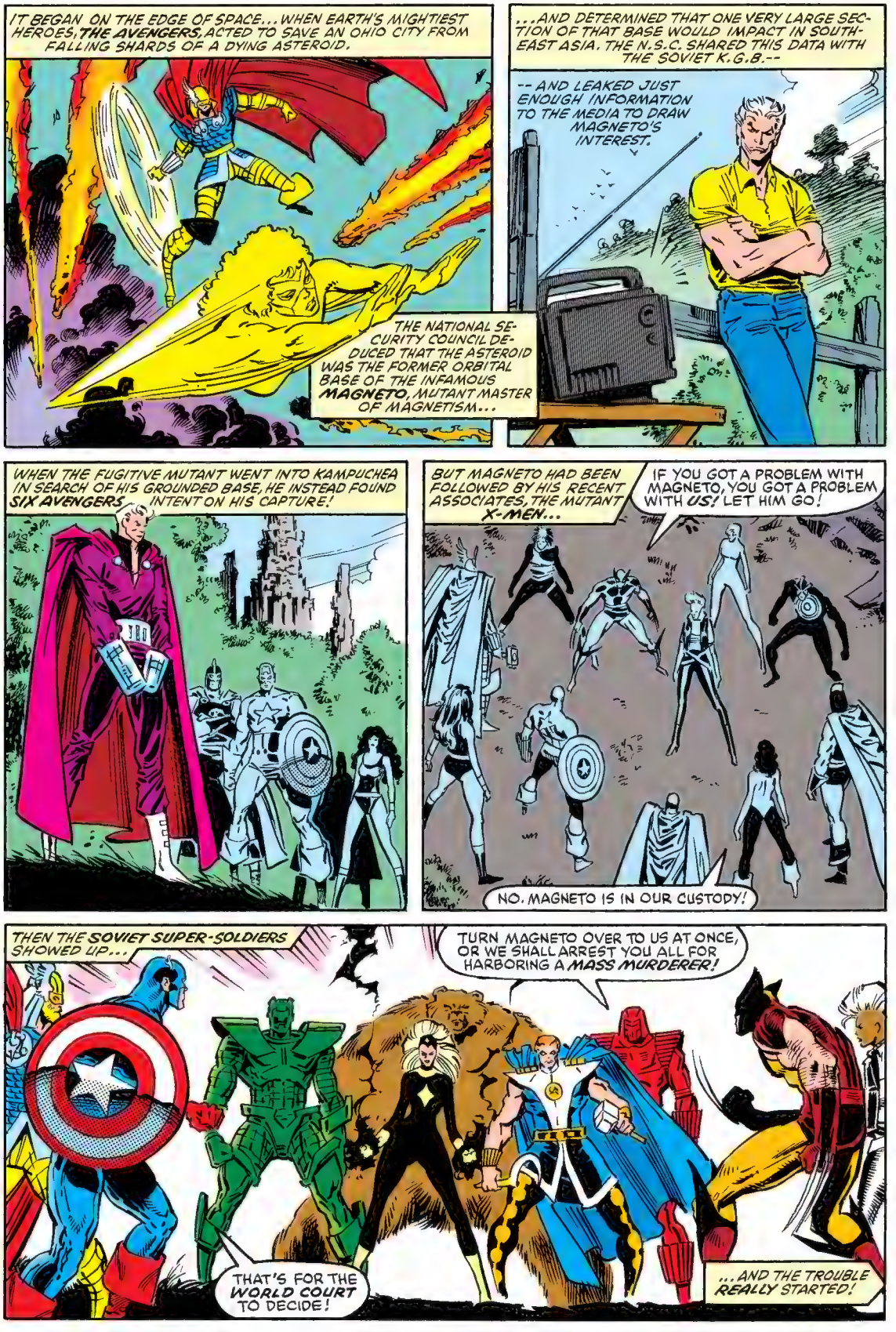
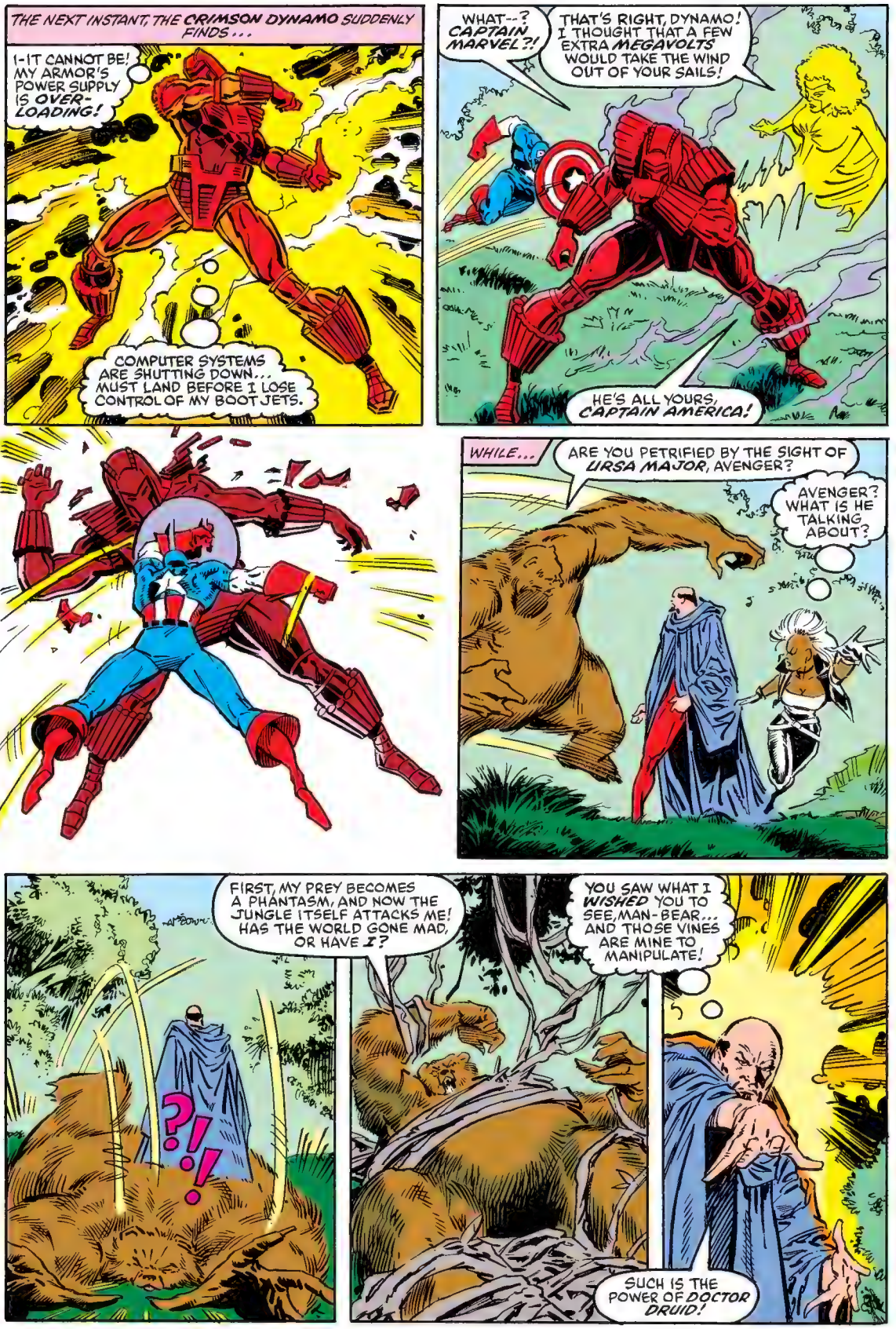
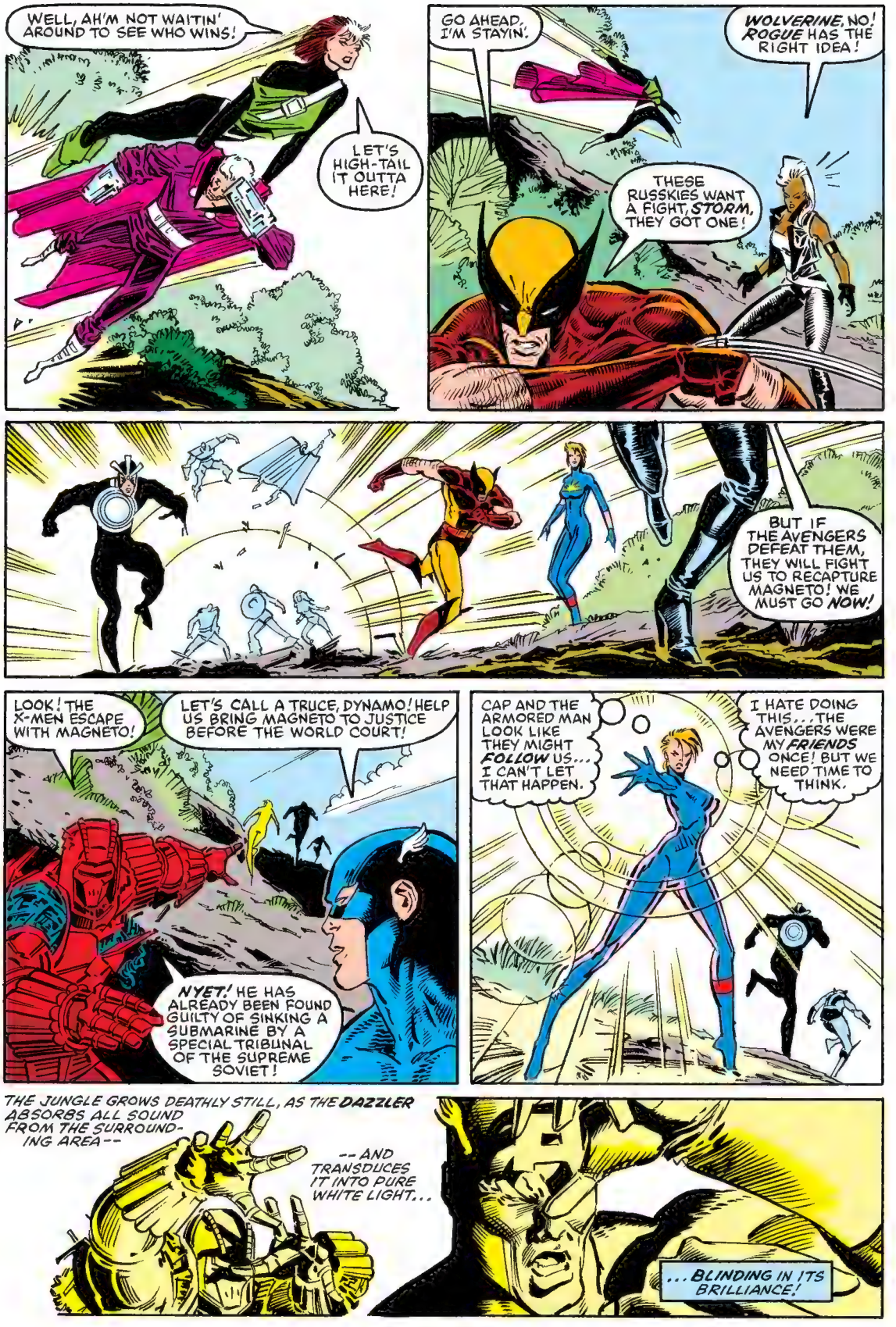
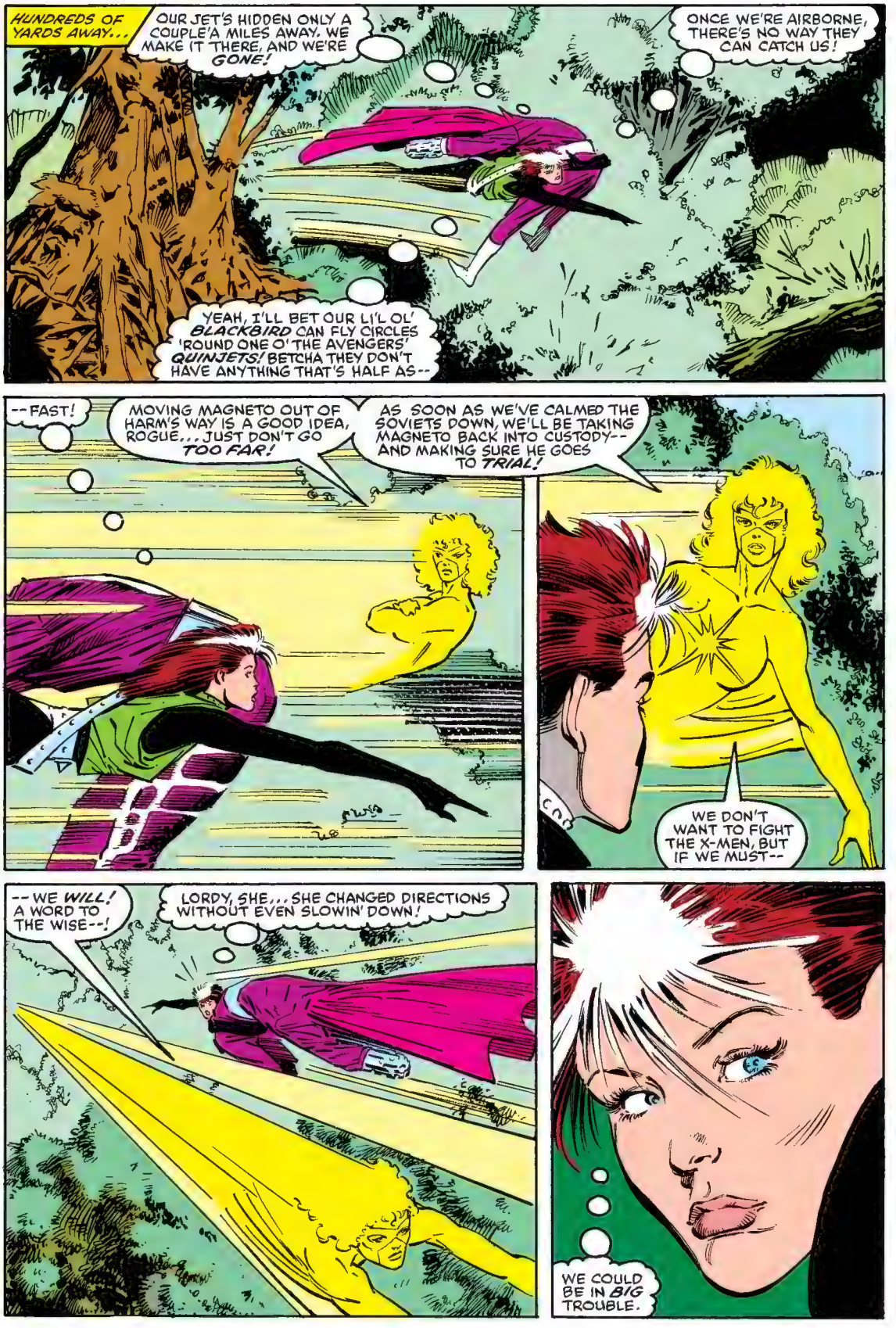
2
MAY
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE
AUTHORITY
#2 IN A FOUR-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES
THE X-MEN VS. THE AVENGERS
THE TEMPTATION OF MAGNETO!

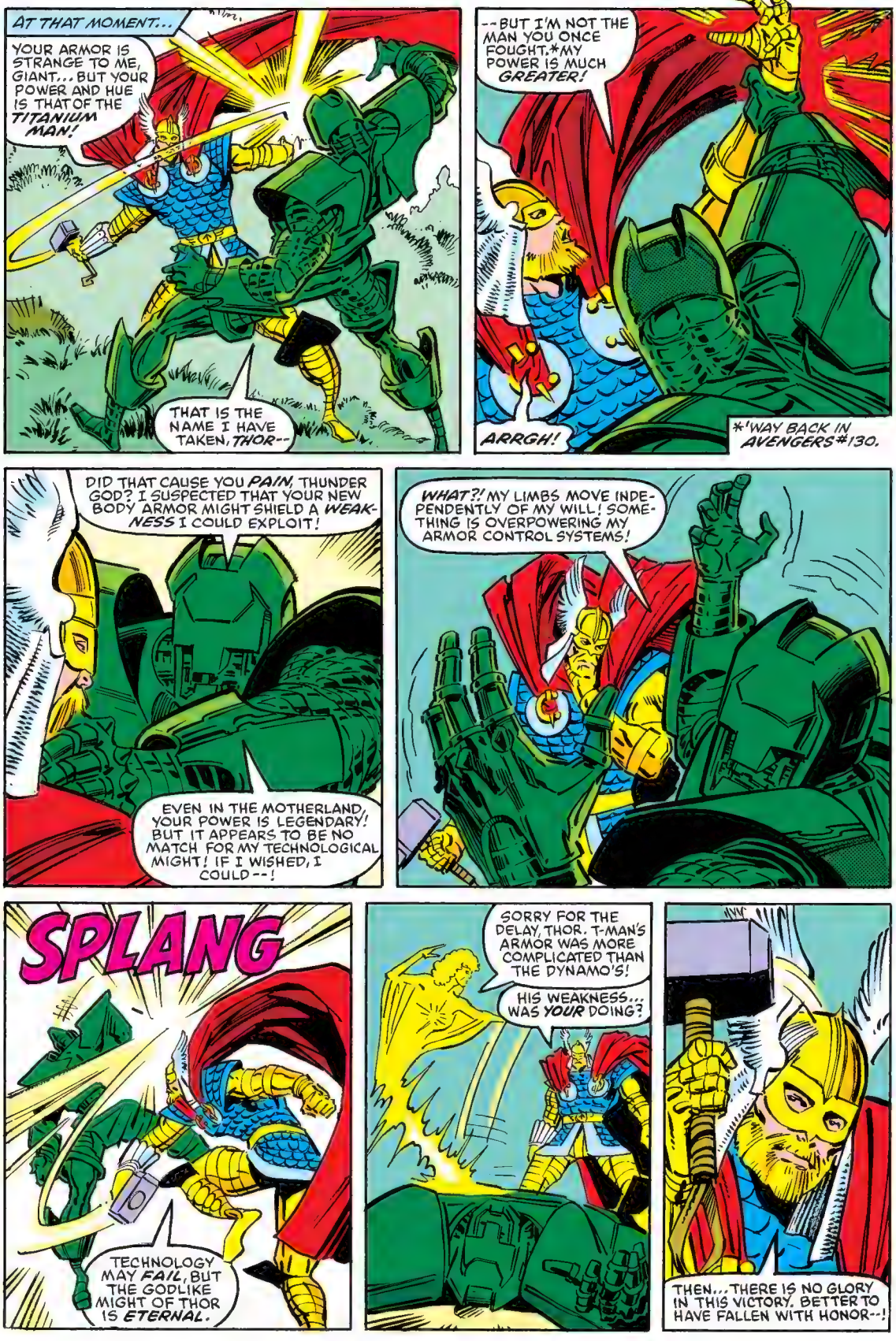

IT BEGAN ON THE EDGE OF SPACE... WHEN EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES, THE AVENGERS, ACTED TO SAVE AN OHIO CITY FROM FALLING SHARDS OF A DYING ASTEROID.
THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL DEDUCED THAT THE ASTEROID WAS THE FORMER ORBITAL BASE OF THE INFAMOUS MAGNETO, MUTANT MASTER OF MAGNETISM...
...AND DETERMINED THAT ONE VERY LARGE SECTION OF THAT BASE WOULD IMPACT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. THE N.S.C. SHARED THIS DATA WITH THE SOVIET K.G.B.--
-- AND LEAKED JUST ENOUGH INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA TO DRAW MAGNETO'S INTEREST.
WHEN THE FUGITIVE MUTANT WENT INTO KAMPUCHEA IN SEARCH OF HIS GROUNDED BASE, HE INSTEAD FOUND SIX AVENGERS INTENT ON HIS CAPTURE!
BUT MAGNETO HAD BEEN FOLLOWED BY HIS RECENT ASSOCIATES, THE MUTANT X-MEN...
IF YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH MAGNETO, YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH US! LET HIM GO!
NO. MAGNETO IS IN OUR CUSTODY!
THEN THE SOVIET SUPER-SOLDIERS SHOWED UP...
TURN MAGNETO OVER TO US AT ONCE, OR WE SHALL ARREST YOU ALL FOR HARBORING A MASS MURDERER!
THAT'S FOR THE WORLD COURT TO DECIDE!
...AND THE TROUBLE REALLY STARTED!

JUSTICE FOR THE PEOPLE! DEATH TO MAGNETO!*
AVENGERS, ATTACK! DON'T LET THEM TAKE MAGNETO!
STAN LEE PRESENTS:
UNEASY ALLIES
SURELY THE AVENGERS HAVE GONE MAD! THEY HAVE NEARLY AS MUCH REASON TO HATE MAGNETO AS DO WE...YET THEY STILL PROTECT HIM! WHY?!?
*TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN.
ROGER STERN WRITER
MARC SILVESTRI PENCILER
JOSEF RUBINSTEIN INKER
JOE ROSEN LETTERER
CHRISTIE SCHEELE COLORIST
MARK GRUENWALD ANN NOCENTI EDITORS
JIM SHOOTER EDITOR IN CHIEF

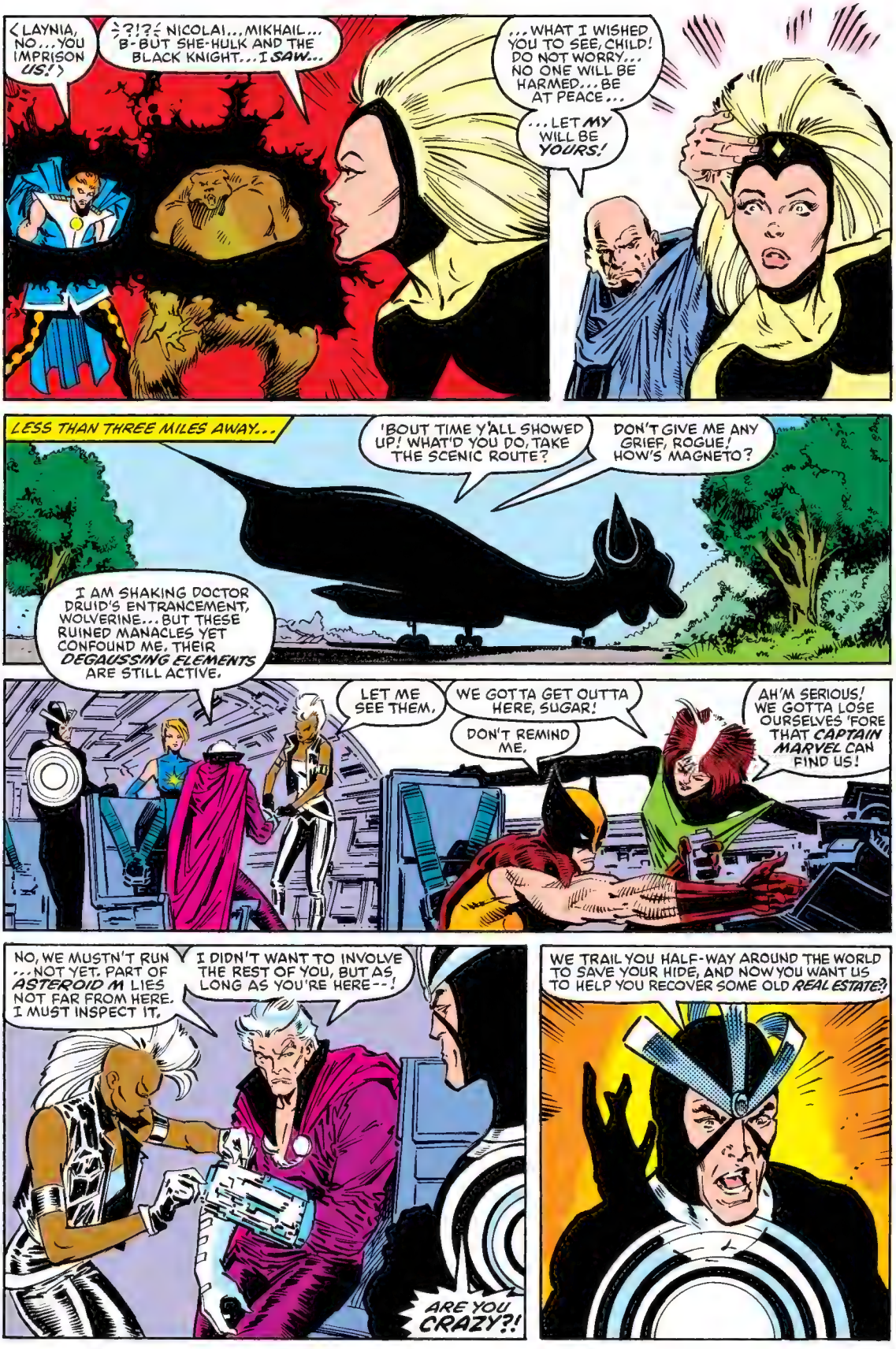

THE NEXT INSTANT, THE CRIMSON DYNAMO SUDDENLY FINDS . . .
I-IT CANNOT BE! MY ARMOR'S POWER SUPPLY IS OVER-LOADING!
COMPUTER SYSTEMS ARE SHUTTING DOWN... MUST LAND BEFORE I LOSE CONTROL OF MY BOOT JETS.
WHAT--? CAPTAIN MARVEL?!
THAT'S RIGHT, DYNAMO! I THOUGHT THAT A FEW EXTRA MEGAVOLTS WOULD TAKE THE WIND OUT OF YOUR SAILS!
HE'S ALL YOURS, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
WHILE...
ARE YOU PETRIFIED BY THE SIGHT OF URSA MAJOR, AVENGER?
AVENGER? WHAT IS HE TALKING ABOUT?
FIRST, MY PREY BECOMES A PHANTASM, AND NOW THE JUNGLE ITSELF ATTACKS ME! HAS THE WORLD GONE MAD, OR HAVE I?
?!!
YOU SAW WHAT I WISHED YOU TO SEE, MAN-BEAR... AND THOSE VINES ARE MINE TO MANIPULATE!
SUCH IS THE POWER OF DOCTOR DRUID!


WELL, AH'M NOT WAITIN' AROUND TO SEE WHO WINS!
LET'S HIGH-TAIL IT OUTTA HERE!
GO AHEAD, I'M STAYIN'.
WOLVERINE, NO! ROGUE HAS THE RIGHT IDEA!
THESE RUSSKIES WANT A FIGHT, STORM, THEY GOT ONE!
BUT IF THE AVENGERS DEFEAT THEM, THEY WILL FIGHT US TO RECAPTURE MAGNETO! WE MUST GO NOW!
LOOK! THE X-MEN ESCAPE WITH MAGNETO!
LET'S CALL A TRUCE, DYNAMO! HELP US BRING MAGNETO TO JUSTICE BEFORE THE WORLD COURT!
NYET! HE HAS ALREADY BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF SINKING A SUBMARINE BY A SPECIAL TRIBUNAL OF THE SUPREME SOVIET!
CAP AND THE ARMORED MAN LOOK LIKE THEY MIGHT FOLLOW US... I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN.
I HATE DOING THIS... THE AVENGERS WERE MY FRIENDS ONCE! BUT WE NEED TIME TO THINK.
THE JUNGLE GROWS DEATHLY STILL, AS THE DAZZLER ABSORBS ALL SOUND FROM THE SURROUNDING AREA--
-- AND TRANSDUCES IT INTO PURE WHITE LIGHT...
...BLINDING IN ITS BRILLIANCE!

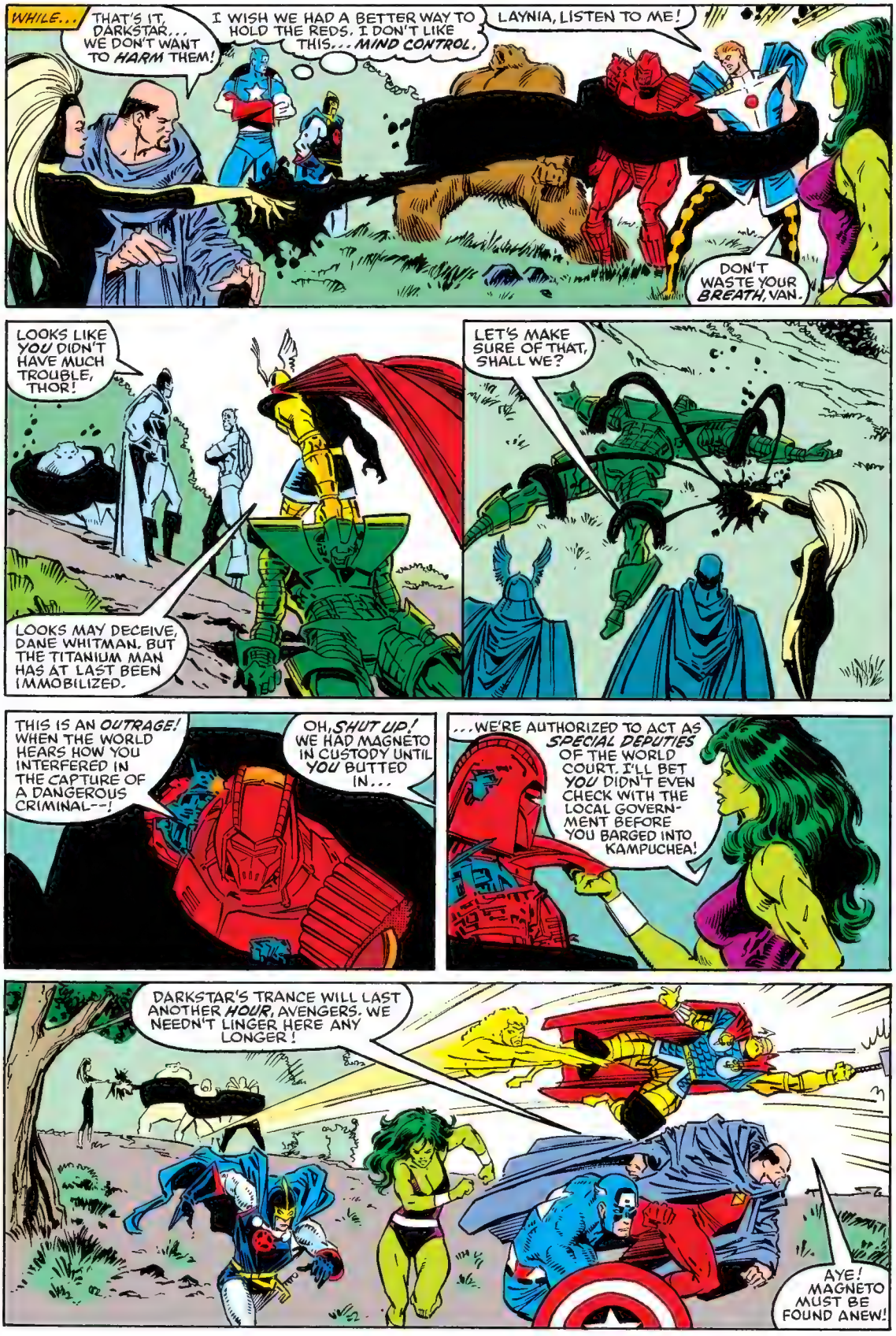

HUNDREDS OF YARDS AWAY...
OUR JET'S HIDDEN ONLY A COUPLE'A MILES AWAY. WE MAKE IT THERE, AND WE'RE GONE!
ONCE WE'RE AIRBORNE, THERE'S NO WAY THEY CAN CATCH US!
YEAH, I'LL BET OUR LI'L OL' BLACKBIRD CAN FLY CIRCLES 'ROUND ONE O' THE AVENGERS' QUINJETS! BETCHA THEY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING THAT'S HALF AS--
--FAST!
MOVING MAGNETO OUT OF HARM'S WAY IS A GOOD IDEA, ROGUE... JUST DON'T GO TOO FAR!
AS SOON AS WE'VE CALMED THE SOVIETS DOWN, WE'LL BE TAKING MAGNETO BACK INTO CUSTODY-- AND MAKING SURE HE GOES TO TRIAL!
WE DON'T WANT TO FIGHT THE X-MEN, BUT IF WE MUST--
--WE WILL! A WORD TO THE WISE--!
LORDY, SHE... SHE CHANGED DIRECTIONS WITHOUT EVEN SLOWIN' DOWN!
WE COULD BE IN BIG TROUBLE.

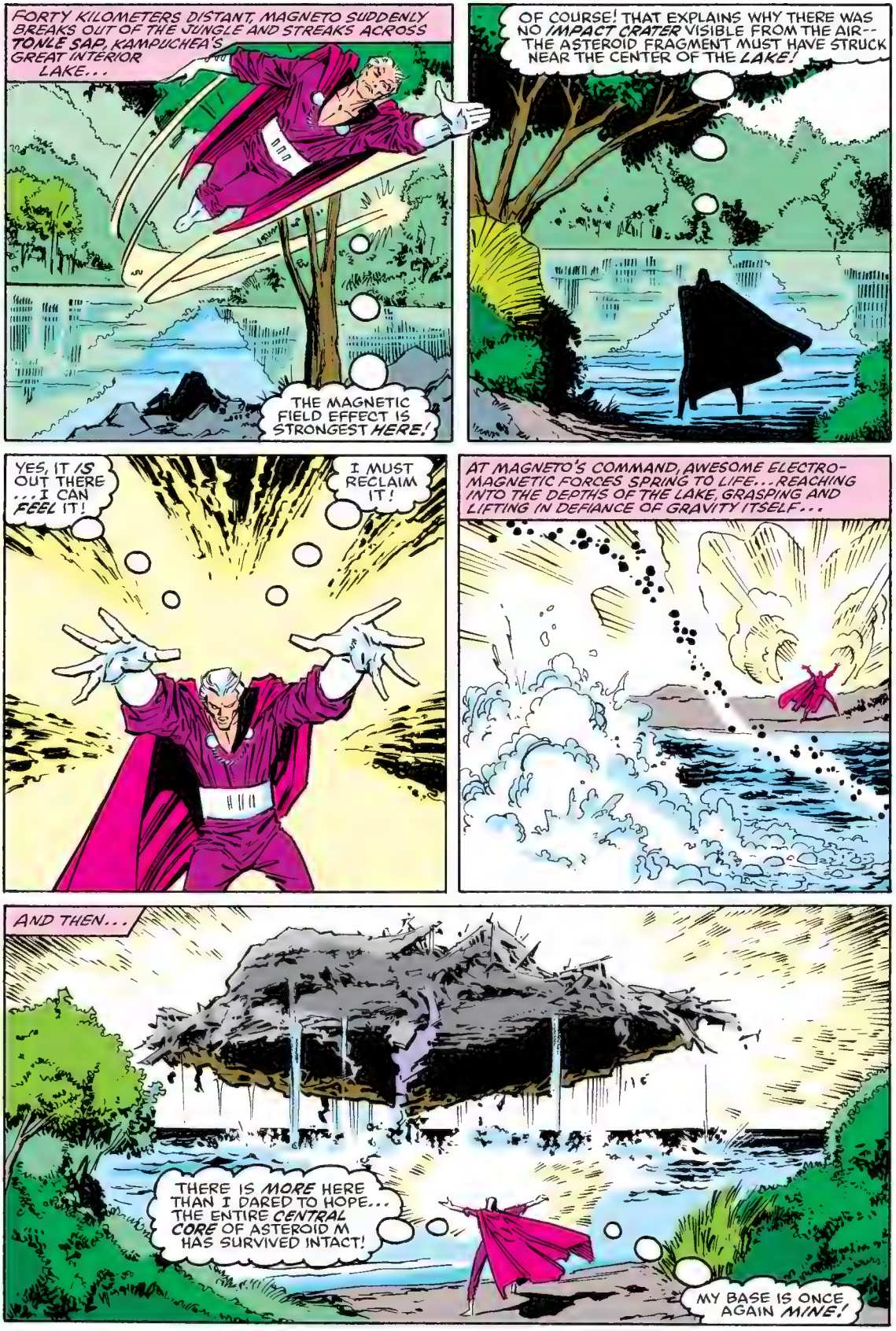

AT THAT MOMENT...
YOUR ARMOR IS STRANGE TO ME, GIANT... BUT YOUR POWER AND HUE IS THAT OF THE TITANIUM MAN!
THAT IS THE NAME I HAVE TAKEN, THOR--
--BUT I'M NOT THE MAN YOU ONCE FOUGHT,* MY POWER IS MUCH GREATER!
ARRGH!
*'WAY BACK IN AVENGERS #130.
DID THAT CAUSE YOU PAIN, THUNDER GOD? I SUSPECTED THAT YOUR NEW BODY ARMOR MIGHT SHIELD A WEAKNESS I COULD EXPLOIT!
EVEN IN THE MOTHERLAND, YOUR POWER IS LEGENDARY! BUT IT APPEARS TO BE NO MATCH FOR MY TECHNOLOGICAL MIGHT! IF I WISHED, I COULD--!
WHAT?! MY LIMBS MOVE INDEPENDENTLY OF MY WILL! SOMETHING IS OVERPOWERING MY ARMOR CONTROL SYSTEMS!
SPLANG
TECHNOLOGY MAY FAIL, BUT THE GODLIKE MIGHT OF THOR IS ETERNAL.
SORRY FOR THE DELAY, THOR. T-MAN'S ARMOR WAS MORE COMPLICATED THAN THE DYNAMO'S!
HIS WEAKNESS... WAS YOUR DOING?
THEN... THERE IS NO GLORY IN THIS VICTORY. BETTER TO HAVE FALLEN WITH HONOR--!

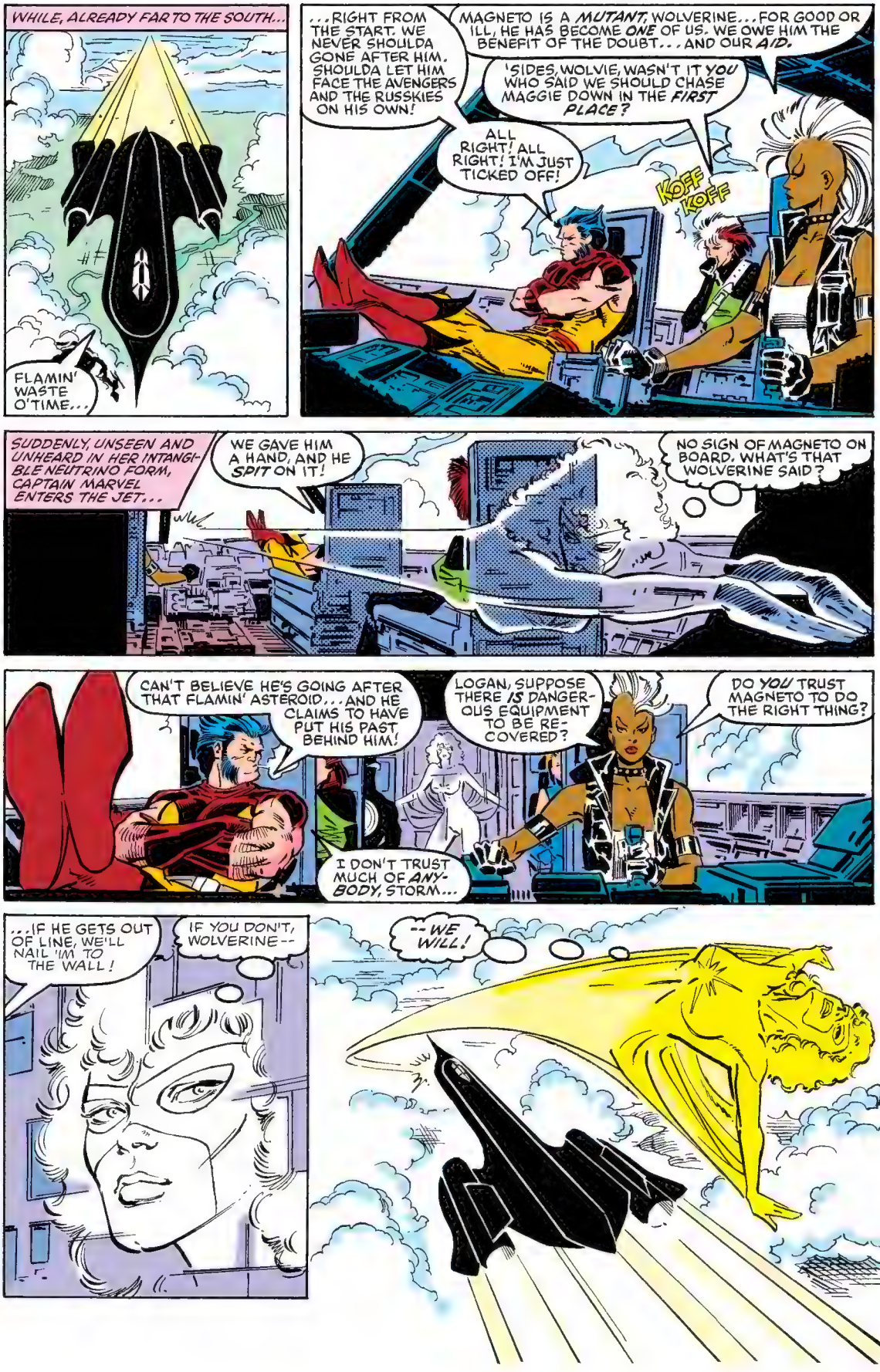
SIMULTANEOUSLY...
NICE LITTLE HAMMER YOU HAVE THERE, RED--
WOK
--BUT IT TAKES MORE THAN A HAMMER TO PLAY THOR!
WHAT THE HEY--?! I'D READ THAT THIS VANGUARD CHUMP HAD SOME SORT OF PERSONAL FORCE FIELD AROUND HIM, SO I DIDN'T BOTHER TO PULL MY PUNCH-- BUT HE'S BETTER PROTECTED THAN I THOUGHT!
I FELT THAT BLOW AS MUCH AS HE DID! IF I HADN'T BEEN BETTER BRACED, I'D HAVE BEEN KNOCKED ON MY BACKSIDE!
VANGUARD!
GREEN-SKINNED WITCH! IF YOU'VE HURT MY BROTHER--
--I'LL MAKE YOU WISH YOU'D NEVER BEEN BORN!
WHAT ARE YOU--?! NOOO!!
DARKSTAR, STOP! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING!
I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I'M DOING, KNIGHT...
...I'M ENCASING YOU AND THE SHE-HULK IN BONDS OF DARKFORCE ...BONDS YOU NEVER SHALL BREAK!

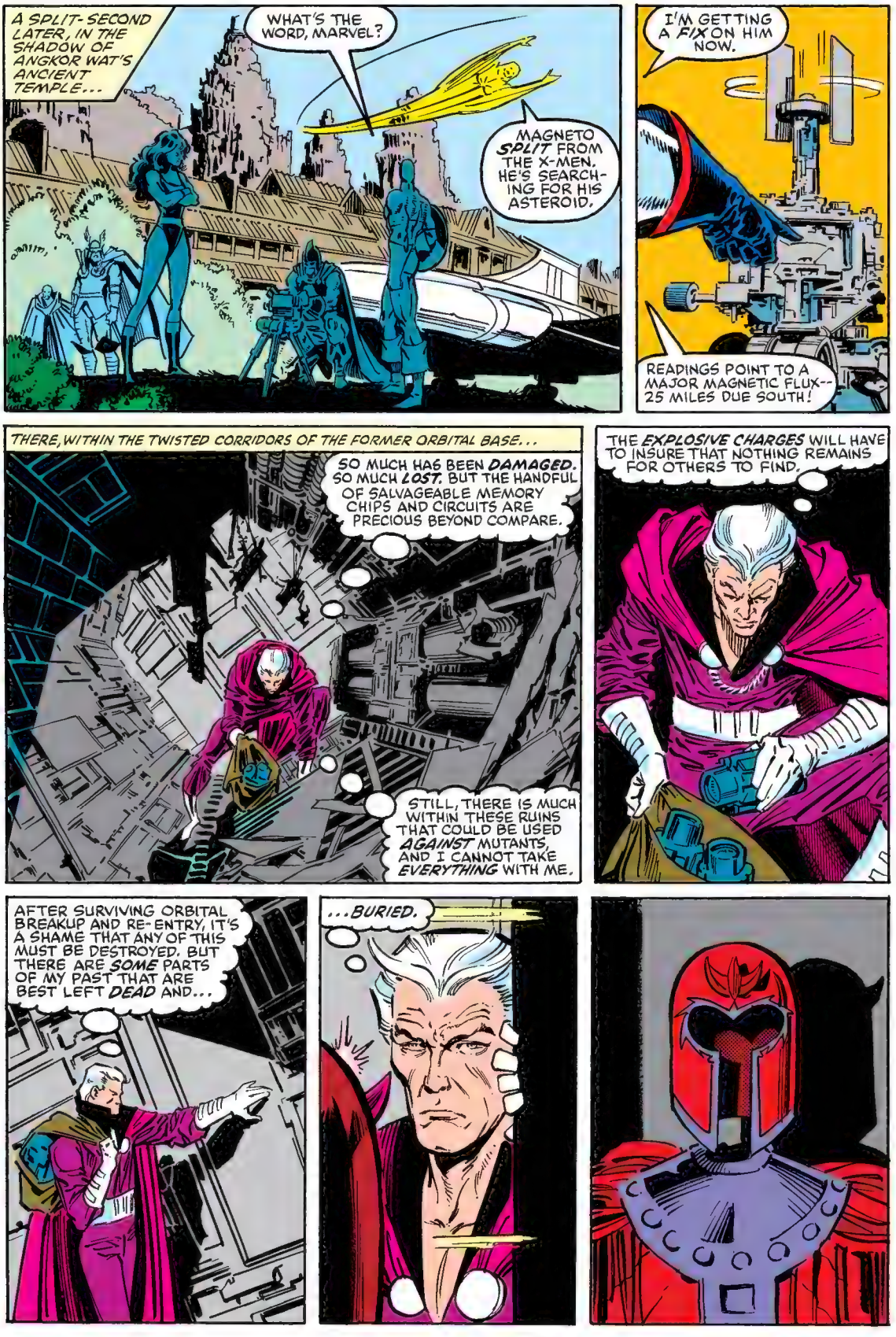

〈LAYNIA, NO...YOU IMPRISON US!〉
≠?!?≠ NICOLAI...MIKHAIL... B-BUT SHE-HULK AND THE BLACK KNIGHT...I SAW...
...WHAT I WISHED YOU TO SEE, CHILD! DO NOT WORRY... NO ONE WILL BE HARMED...BE AT PEACE...
...LET MY WILL BE YOURS!
LESS THAN THREE MILES AWAY...
'BOUT TIME Y'ALL SHOWED UP! WHAT'D YOU DO, TAKE THE SCENIC ROUTE?
DON'T GIVE ME ANY GRIEF, ROGUE! HOW'S MAGNETO?
I AM SHAKING DOCTOR DRUID'S ENTRANCEMENT, WOLVERINE...BUT THESE RUINED MANACLES YET CONFOUND ME, THEIR DEGAUSSING ELEMENTS ARE STILL ACTIVE.
LET ME SEE THEM.
WE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE, SUGAR!
DON'T REMIND ME,
AH'M SERIOUS! WE GOTTA LOSE OURSELVES 'FORE THAT CAPTAIN MARVEL CAN FIND US!
NO, WE MUSTN'T RUN ...NOT YET. PART OF ASTEROID M LIES NOT FAR FROM HERE. I MUST INSPECT IT.
I DIDN'T WANT TO INVOLVE THE REST OF YOU, BUT AS LONG AS YOU'RE HERE--!
ARE YOU CRAZY?!
WE TRAIL YOU HALF-WAY AROUND THE WORLD TO SAVE YOUR HIDE, AND NOW YOU WANT US TO HELP YOU RECOVER SOME OLD REAL ESTATE?!

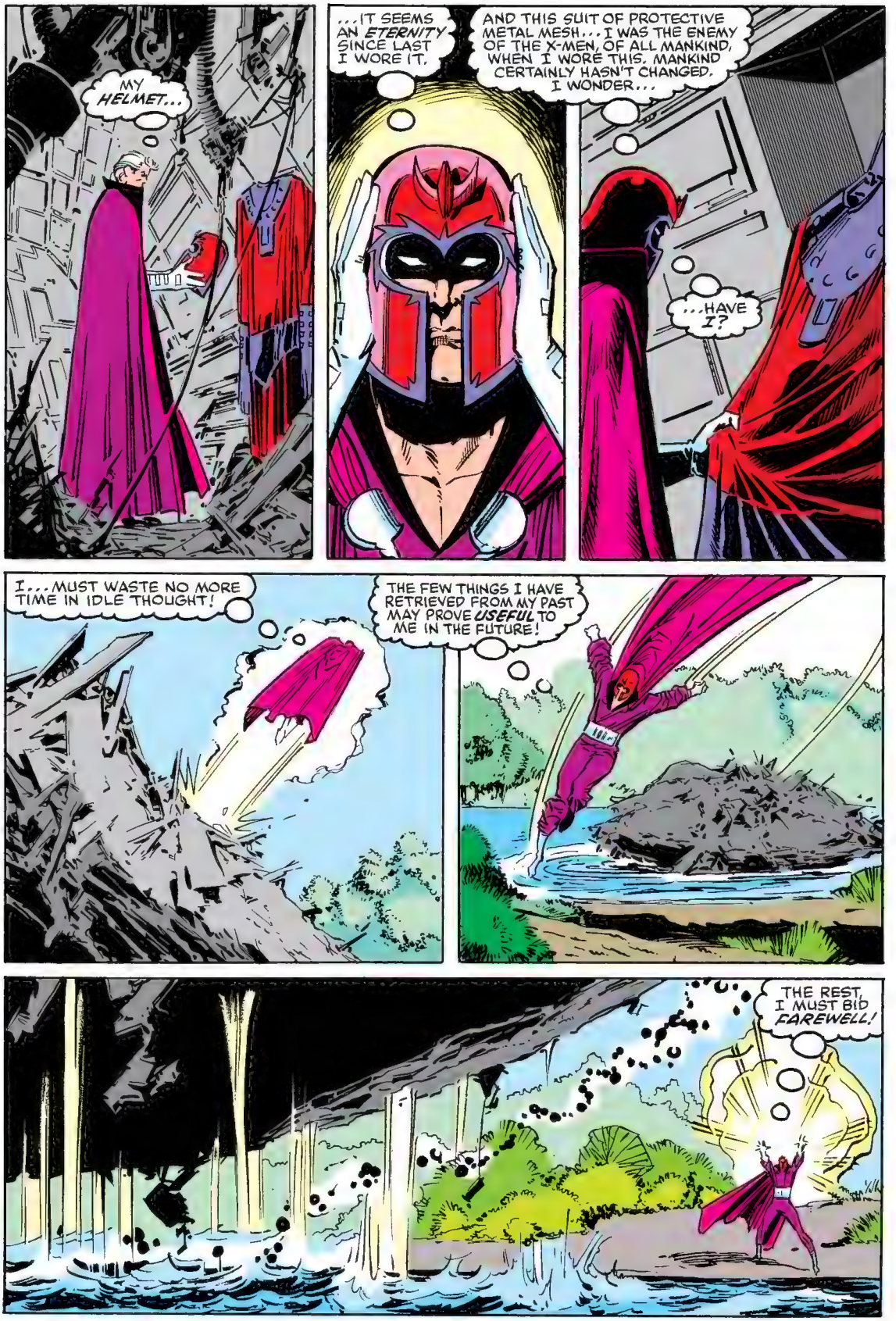
HAVOK, CALM DOWN! YOUR POWER LEVELS ARE BUILDING TOO FAST! IF YOU LOSE CONTROL NOW, THE SHOCKWAVE WOULD RIP THE BLACKBIRD APART!
ALL RIGHT...I'LL WATCH IT. BUT I WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S SO BLASTED IMPORTANT ABOUT SOME CHUNK OF ROCK!
A SECTION OF MY OLD BASE MAY BE INTACT ON THAT "CHUNK OF ROCK," AS YOU PUT IT. ANY EQUIPMENT WHICH SURVIVED IMPACT IS TOO DANGEROUS TO FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS.
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT YOUR HANDS ARE THE RIGHT ONES? BACK WHEN YOU LIVED AND WORKED ON THAT ASTEROID--
--YOU WERE MAKIN' PLANS TO MAKE THE WORLD SAFE FOR MUTANTKIND BY TAKING IT OVER, AN' YOU WERE PERFECTLY WILLIN' TO TORTURE OR KILL ANYONE WHO STOOD IN YOUR WAY.-*
*X-MEN #112-113, FOR EXAMPLE.
THOSE DAYS ARE BEHIND ME, WOLVERINE.
THE AVENGERS MUST BE AWARE OF THIS ASTEROID FRAGMENT, MAGNETO. IF IT IS ANY DANGER, THEY WILL DEAL WITH IT. OUR JOB IS TO GET YOU TO--
NO, I INSIST UPON FINDING IT...
...BY MYSELF, IF NECESSARY!
SHOULD I STOP HIM?
I DOUBT YA COULD, KID.
HE HAS MADE HIS DECISION...
...AND PLACED HIMSELF OUTSIDE OUR PROTECTION.
LET'S GO. WE'RE WASTIN' OUR TIME HERE!

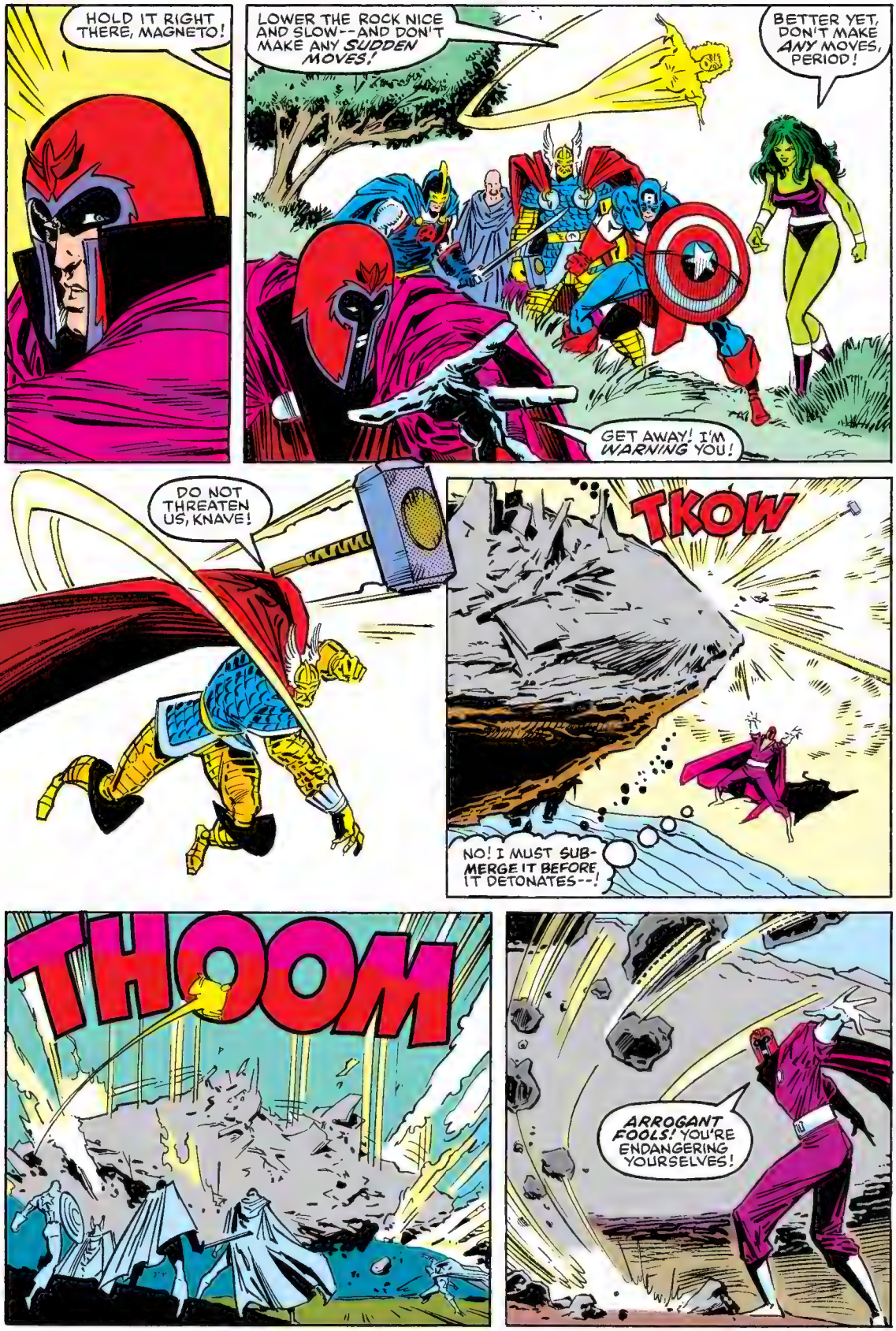

WHILE...
THAT'S IT, DARKSTAR... WE DON'T WANT TO HARM THEM!
I WISH WE HAD A BETTER WAY TO HOLD THE REDS. I DON'T LIKE THIS... MIND CONTROL.
LAYNIA, LISTEN TO ME!
DON'T WASTE YOUR BREATH, VAN.
LOOKS LIKE YOU DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TROUBLE, THOR!
LOOKS MAY DECEIVE, DANE WHITMAN. BUT THE TITANIUM MAN HAS AT LAST BEEN IMMOBILIZED.
LET'S MAKE SURE OF THAT, SHALL WE?
THIS IS AN OUTRAGE! WHEN THE WORLD HEARS HOW YOU INTERFERED IN THE CAPTURE OF A DANGEROUS CRIMINAL--!
OH, SHUT UP! WE HAD MAGNETO IN CUSTODY UNTIL YOU BUTTED IN...
...WE'RE AUTHORIZED TO ACT AS SPECIAL DEPUTIES OF THE WORLD COURT. I'LL BET YOU DIDN'T EVEN CHECK WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BEFORE YOU BARGED INTO KAMPUCHEA!
DARKSTAR'S TRANCE WILL LAST ANOTHER HOUR, AVENGERS. WE NEEDN'T LINGER HERE ANY LONGER!
AYE! MAGNETO MUST BE FOUND ANEW!


FORTY KILOMETERS DISTANT, MAGNETO SUDDENLY BREAKS OUT OF THE JUNGLE AND STREAKS ACROSS TONLE SAP, KAMPUCHEA'S GREAT INTERIOR LAKE...
THE MAGNETIC FIELD EFFECT IS STRONGEST HERE!
OF COURSE! THAT EXPLAINS WHY THERE WAS NO IMPACT CRATER VISIBLE FROM THE AIR-- THE ASTEROID FRAGMENT MUST HAVE STRUCK NEAR THE CENTER OF THE LAKE!
YES, IT IS OUT THERE ...I CAN FEEL IT!
I MUST RECLAIM IT!
AT MAGNETO'S COMMAND, AWESOME ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FORCES SPRING TO LIFE...REACHING INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE LAKE, GRASPING AND LIFTING IN DEFIANCE OF GRAVITY ITSELF...
AND THEN...
THERE IS MORE HERE THAN I DARED TO HOPE... THE ENTIRE CENTRAL CORE OF ASTEROID M HAS SURVIVED INTACT!
MY BASE IS ONCE AGAIN MINE!


WHILE, ALREADY FAR TO THE SOUTH...
FLAMIN' WASTE O'TIME...
...RIGHT FROM THE START. WE NEVER SHOULDA GONE AFTER HIM. SHOULDA LET HIM FACE THE AVENGERS AND THE RUSSKIES ON HIS OWN!
MAGNETO IS A MUTANT, WOLVERINE...FOR GOOD OR ILL, HE HAS BECOME ONE OF US. WE OWE HIM THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT...AND OUR AID.
'SIDES, WOLVIE, WASN'T IT YOU WHO SAID WE SHOULD CHASE MAGGIE DOWN IN THE FIRST PLACE?
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I'M JUST TICKED OFF!
KOFF KOFF
SUDDENLY, UNSEEN AND UNHEARD IN HER INTANGIBLE NEUTRINO FORM, CAPTAIN MARVEL ENTERS THE JET...
WE GAVE HIM A HAND, AND HE SPIT ON IT!
NO SIGN OF MAGNETO ON BOARD. WHAT'S THAT WOLVERINE SAID?
CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S GOING AFTER THAT FLAMIN' ASTEROID...AND HE CLAIMS TO HAVE PUT HIS PAST BEHIND HIM!
LOGAN, SUPPOSE THERE IS DANGEROUS EQUIPMENT TO BE RECOVERED?
DO YOU TRUST MAGNETO TO DO THE RIGHT THING?
I DON'T TRUST MUCH OF ANYBODY, STORM...
...IF HE GETS OUT OF LINE, WE'LL NAIL 'IM TO THE WALL!
IF YOU DON'T, WOLVERINE--
--WE WILL!


A SPLIT-SECOND LATER, IN THE SHADOW OF ANGKOR WAT'S ANCIENT TEMPLE...
WHAT'S THE WORD, MARVEL?
MAGNETO SPLIT FROM THE X-MEN. HE'S SEARCHING FOR HIS ASTEROID.
I'M GETTING A FIX ON HIM NOW.
READINGS POINT TO A MAJOR MAGNETIC FLUX--25 MILES DUE SOUTH!
THERE, WITHIN THE TWISTED CORRIDORS OF THE FORMER ORBITAL BASE...
SO MUCH HAS BEEN DAMAGED. SO MUCH LOST. BUT THE HANDFUL OF SALVAGEABLE MEMORY CHIPS AND CIRCUITS ARE PRECIOUS BEYOND COMPARE.
STILL, THERE IS MUCH WITHIN THESE RUINS THAT COULD BE USED AGAINST MUTANTS, AND I CANNOT TAKE EVERYTHING WITH ME.
THE EXPLOSIVE CHARGES WILL HAVE TO INSURE THAT NOTHING REMAINS FOR OTHERS TO FIND.
AFTER SURVIVING ORBITAL BREAKUP AND RE-ENTRY, IT'S A SHAME THAT ANY OF THIS MUST BE DESTROYED. BUT THERE ARE SOME PARTS OF MY PAST THAT ARE BEST LEFT DEAD AND...
...BURIED.

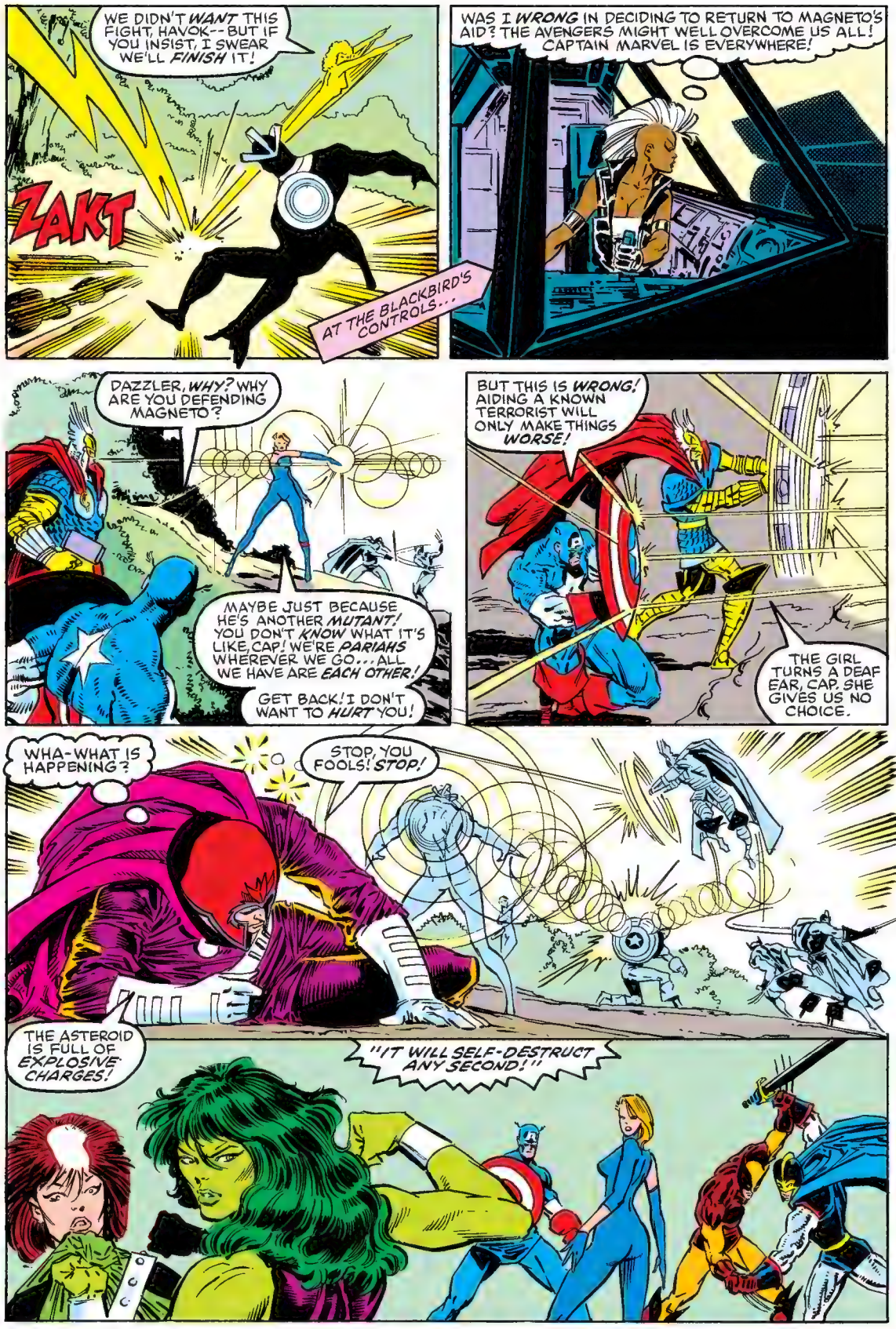

MY HELMET...
...IT SEEMS AN ETERNITY SINCE LAST I WORE IT.
AND THIS SUIT OF PROTECTIVE METAL MESH... I WAS THE ENEMY OF THE X-MEN, OF ALL MANKIND, WHEN I WORE THIS. MANKIND CERTAINLY HASN'T CHANGED. I WONDER...
...HAVE I?
I...MUST WASTE NO MORE TIME IN IDLE THOUGHT!
THE FEW THINGS I HAVE RETRIEVED FROM MY PAST MAY PROVE USEFUL TO ME IN THE FUTURE!
THE REST, I MUST BID FAREWELL!


HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, MAGNETO!
LOWER THE ROCK NICE AND SLOW--AND DON'T MAKE ANY SUDDEN MOVES!
BETTER YET, DON'T MAKE ANY MOVES, PERIOD!
GET AWAY! I'M WARNING YOU!
DO NOT THREATEN US, KNAVE!
TKOW
NO! I MUST SUB-MERGE IT BEFORE IT DETONATES--!
THOOM
ARROGANT FOOLS! YOU'RE ENDANGERING YOURSELVES!

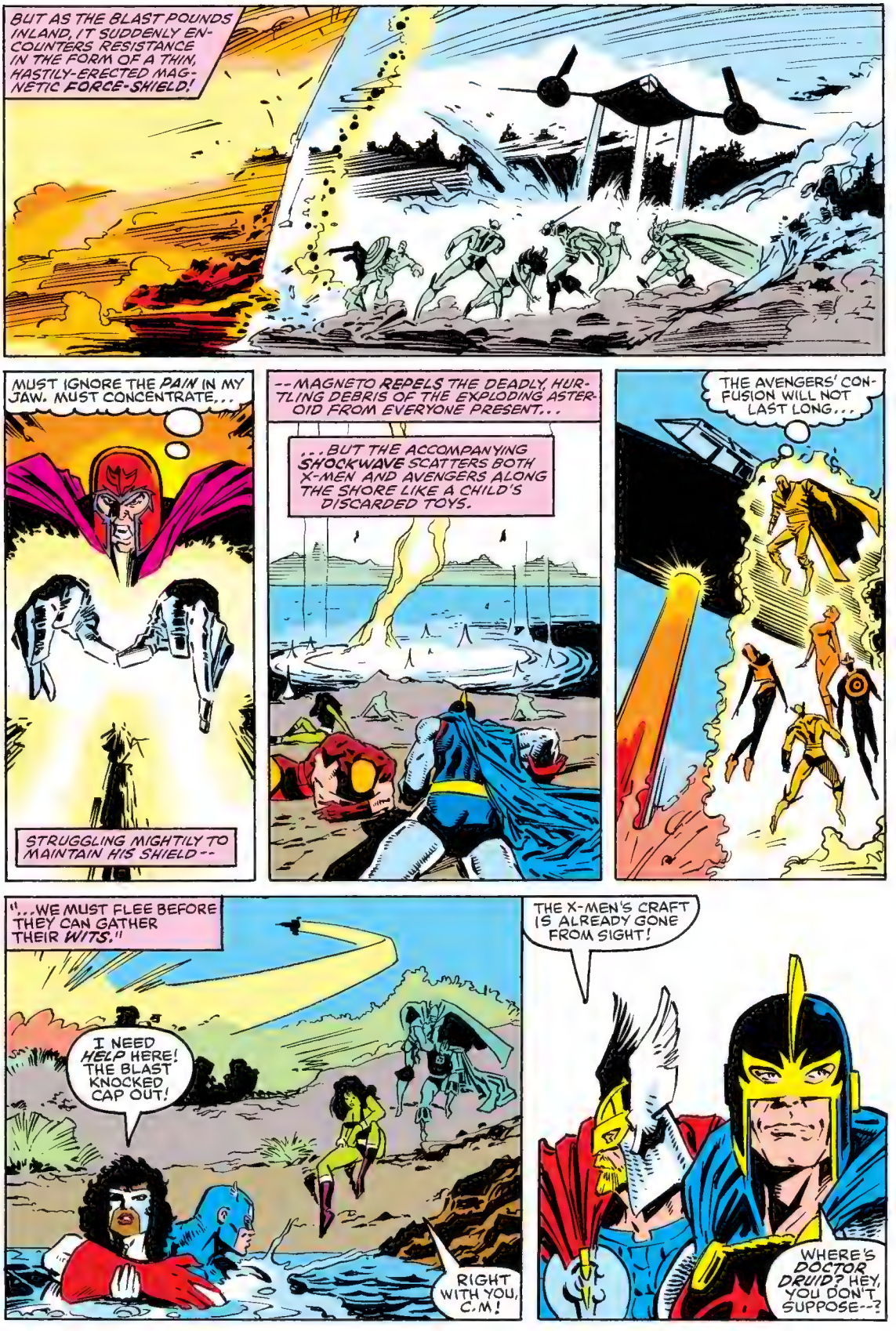
YOU HAVE SOME GALL, CALLING US ARROGANT!
I'LL SECOND THAT!
WE'VE GONE PRETTY EASY ON YOU UP TILL NOW, MISTER! BUT YOU CAN PUSH THE AVENGERS JUST SO FAR!
HAVE AT YOU, VILLAIN!
BAH! MERE PHYSICAL FORCE CANNOT BREACH MY MAGNETIC FIELDS!
NO, BUT CERTAIN FORMS OF ENERGY CAN PASS THROUGH EASILY, CAN'T THEY?
WHA--?
AARGH!

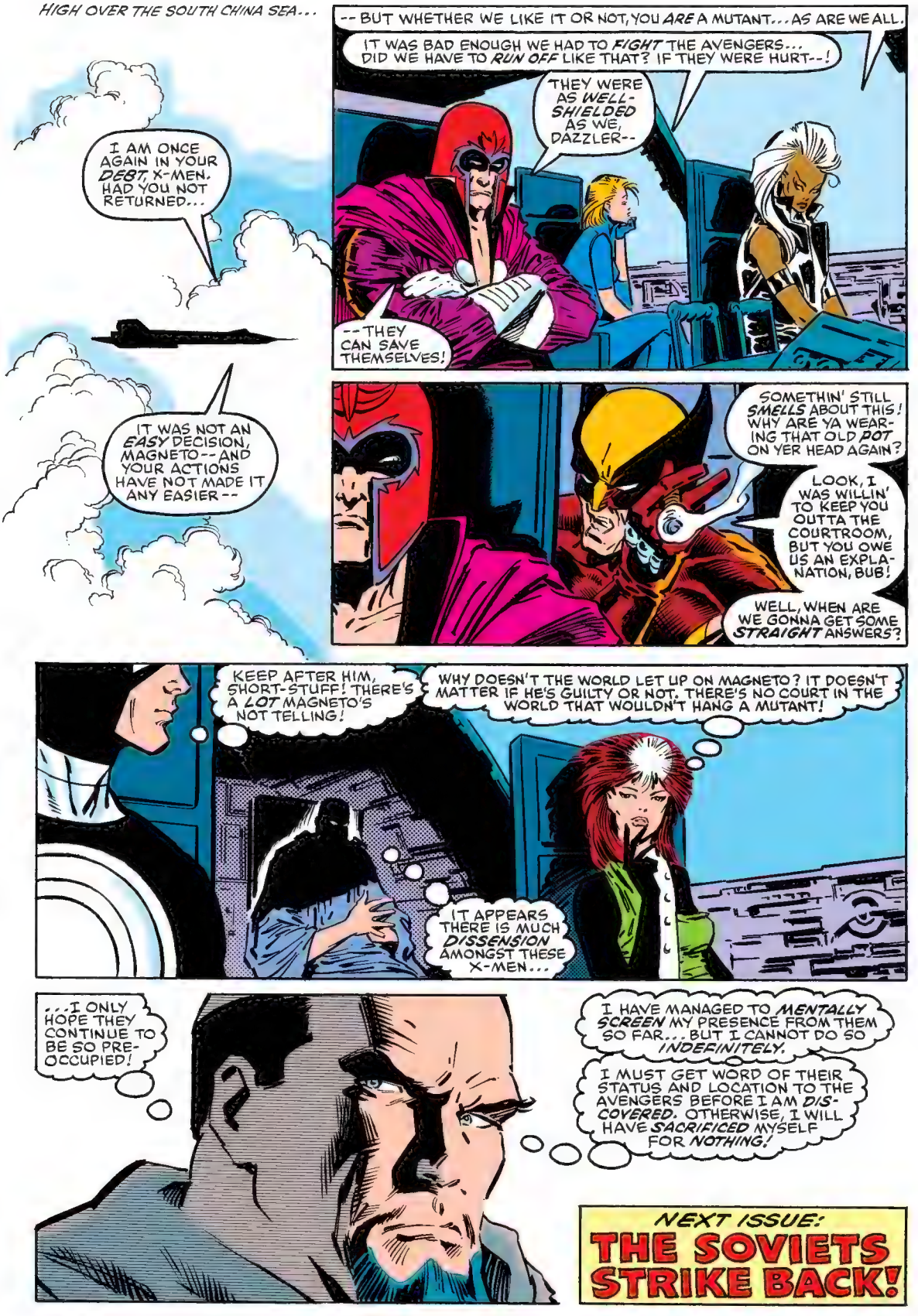
BUT, EVEN AS MAGNETO FALLS, THE AIR IS SUDDENLY SPLIT BY THE ROAR OF TWIN RAMJET ENGINES...
THEN, AS THE CRAFT SWIFTLY SHIFTS TO VERTICAL HOVER MODE...
HEADS UP, DAHLINGS...
÷?!?÷
...THE X-MEN ARE BACK-- AN' WE GOT SOME BUSINESS TO FINISH!
HEY!
WAPT
THAT DOES IT! YOU'VE MADE ME MAD NOW, ROGUE!
GOOD! AS SOON AS AH TOUCH YOU AN' ABSORB YOUR POWERS, I'LL--
HA! I KNOW BETTER THAN TO LET YOU DO THAT!
WUNK
THUD!
PLOOSH
THIS IS FOOLISHNESS! NEVER SHOULDA LET STORM TURN US AROUND! BUT, LONG AS WE'RE HERE...
HIT 'EM HARD, KIDDIES! THE AVENGERS ARE NO PUSH-OVERS!
NEITHER ARE WE!

CAP! LOOK OUT!
SKAMM
NOT BAD! YOU SIDE-STEPPED HAVOK'S FORCE BLAST LIKE AN ACE.
'COURSE THE KID'S STILL GREEN... HE TELEGRAPHED THAT BY A MILE.
I DON'T MISS SO EASY!
SAVE IT FOR YOUR FAN CLUB, WOLVERINE!
KZING
EH? THAT THRUST SHOULDA CUT CLEAN THROUGH YOUR PIG-STICKER! MY CLAWS...
..."ARE MADE OF RAZOR-SHARP ADAMANTIUM," RIGHT? WELL, MY SWORD'S A LITTLE TOUGHER--
KTA NG
IT WAS FORGED BY A FELLA NAME OF MERLIN.
YOU OUGHTTA KNOW BY NOW, GIRL, IT TAKES MORE'N A DUNKIN' AN' A PUNCHIN' TO KEEP ME DOWN!
BIF
SO WHO SAID I WANT TO KEEP YOU DOWN?
PTOOM

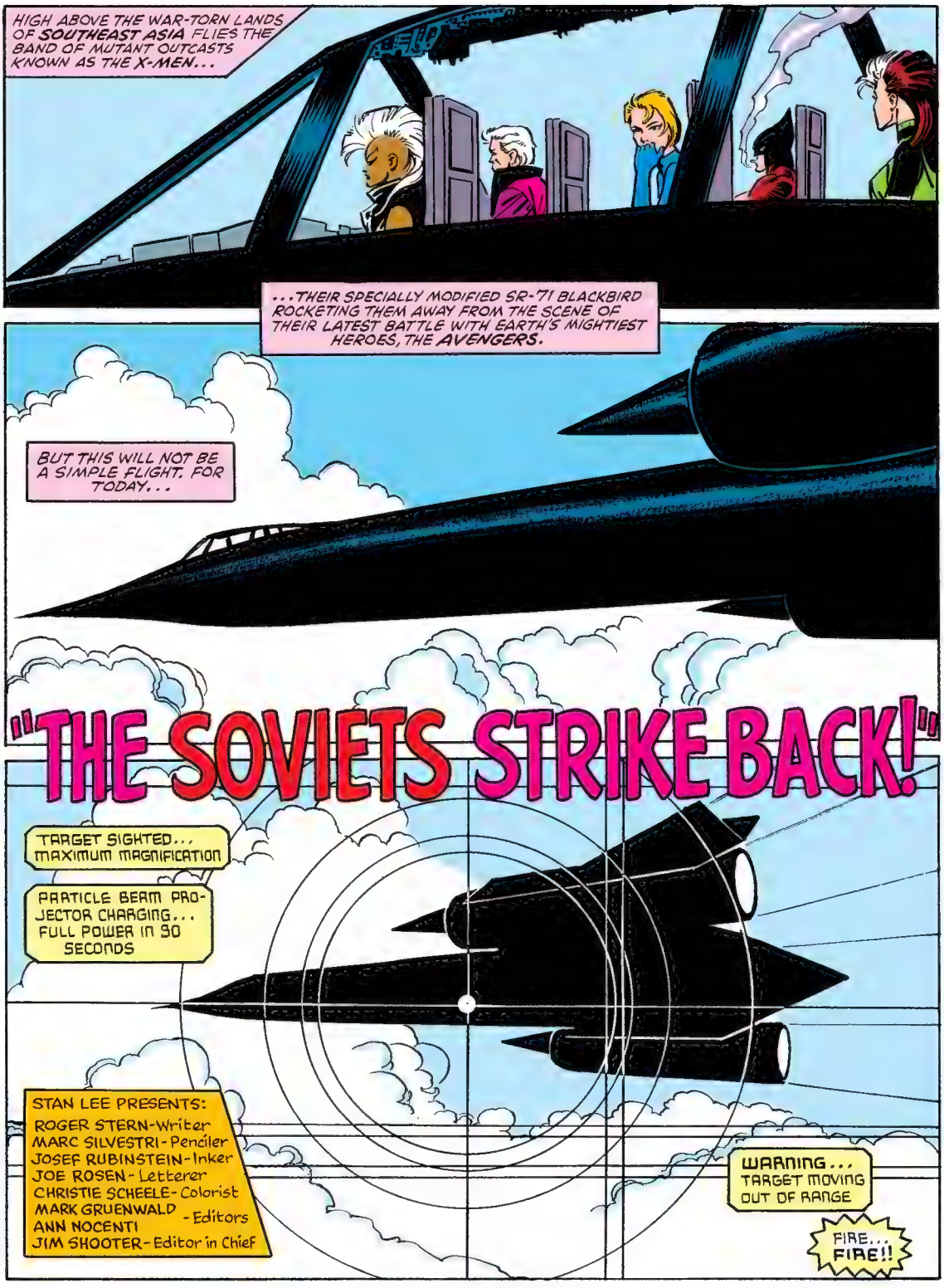

WE DIDN'T WANT THIS FIGHT, HAVOK-- BUT IF YOU INSIST, I SWEAR WE'LL FINISH IT!
ZAKT
AT THE BLACKBIRD'S CONTROLS...
WAS I WRONG IN DECIDING TO RETURN TO MAGNETO'S AID? THE AVENGERS MIGHT WELL OVERCOME US ALL! CAPTAIN MARVEL IS EVERYWHERE!
DAZZLER, WHY? WHY ARE YOU DEFENDING MAGNETO?
MAYBE JUST BECAUSE HE'S ANOTHER MUTANT! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE, CAP! WE'RE PARIAHS WHEREVER WE GO... ALL WE HAVE ARE EACH OTHER!
GET BACK! I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU!
BUT THIS IS WRONG! AIDING A KNOWN TERRORIST WILL ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE!
THE GIRL TURNS A DEAF EAR, CAP. SHE GIVES US NO CHOICE.
WHA-WHAT IS HAPPENING?
STOP, YOU FOOLS! STOP!
THE ASTEROID IS FULL OF EXPLOSIVE CHARGES!
"IT WILL SELF-DESTRUCT ANY SECOND!"

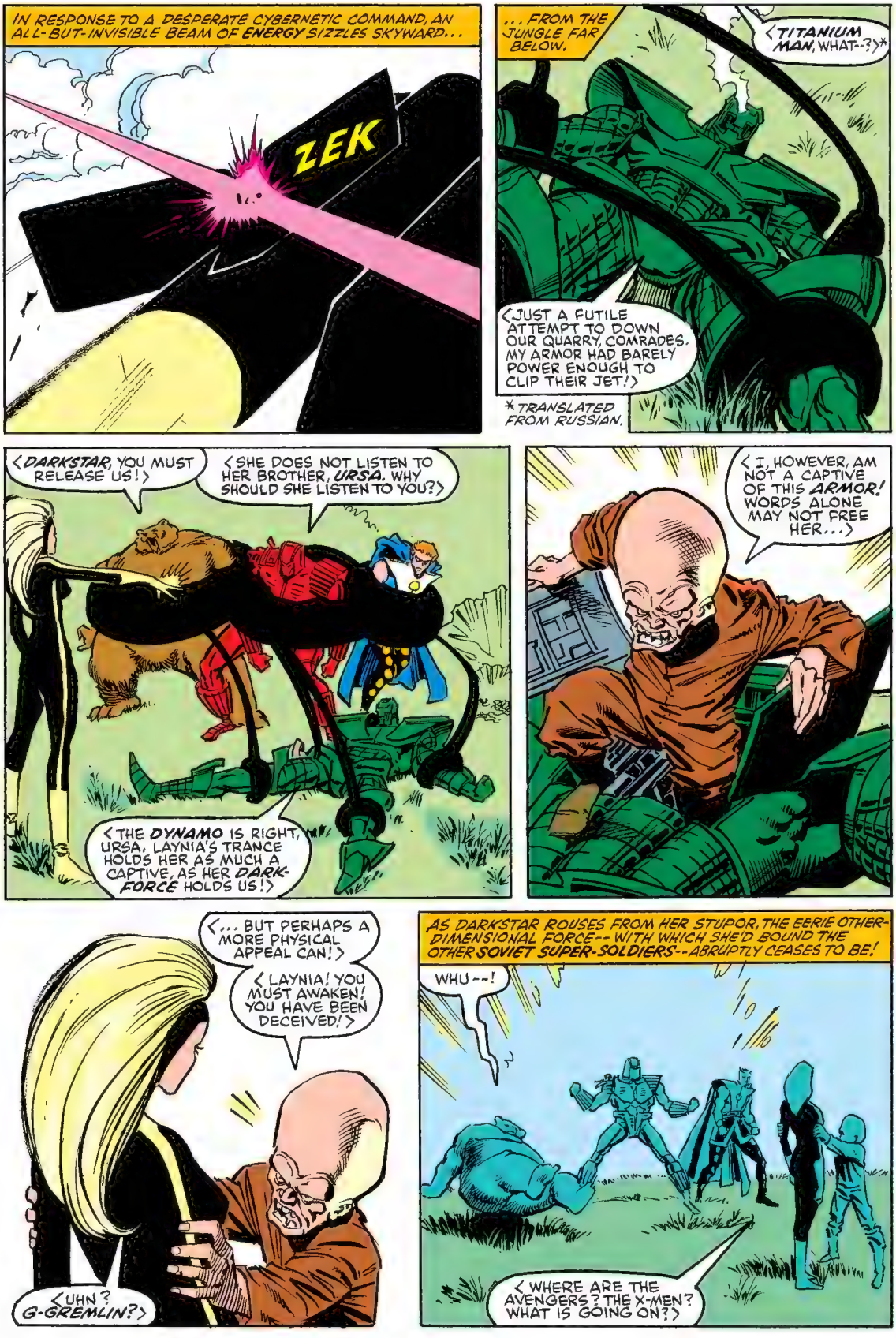
SO QUICKLY DOES CAPTAIN MARVEL REACT--
--THAT THE OTHERS SEEM FROZEN IN PLACE.
IN AN IMPERCEPTIBLY SMALL FRACTION OF A SECOND, SHE FLASHES THROUGH THE ASTEROID'S TWISTING CORRIDOR--
--AND FINDS THE EXPLOSIVE DEVICES...
...TOO LATE!
THRAK-KOOM

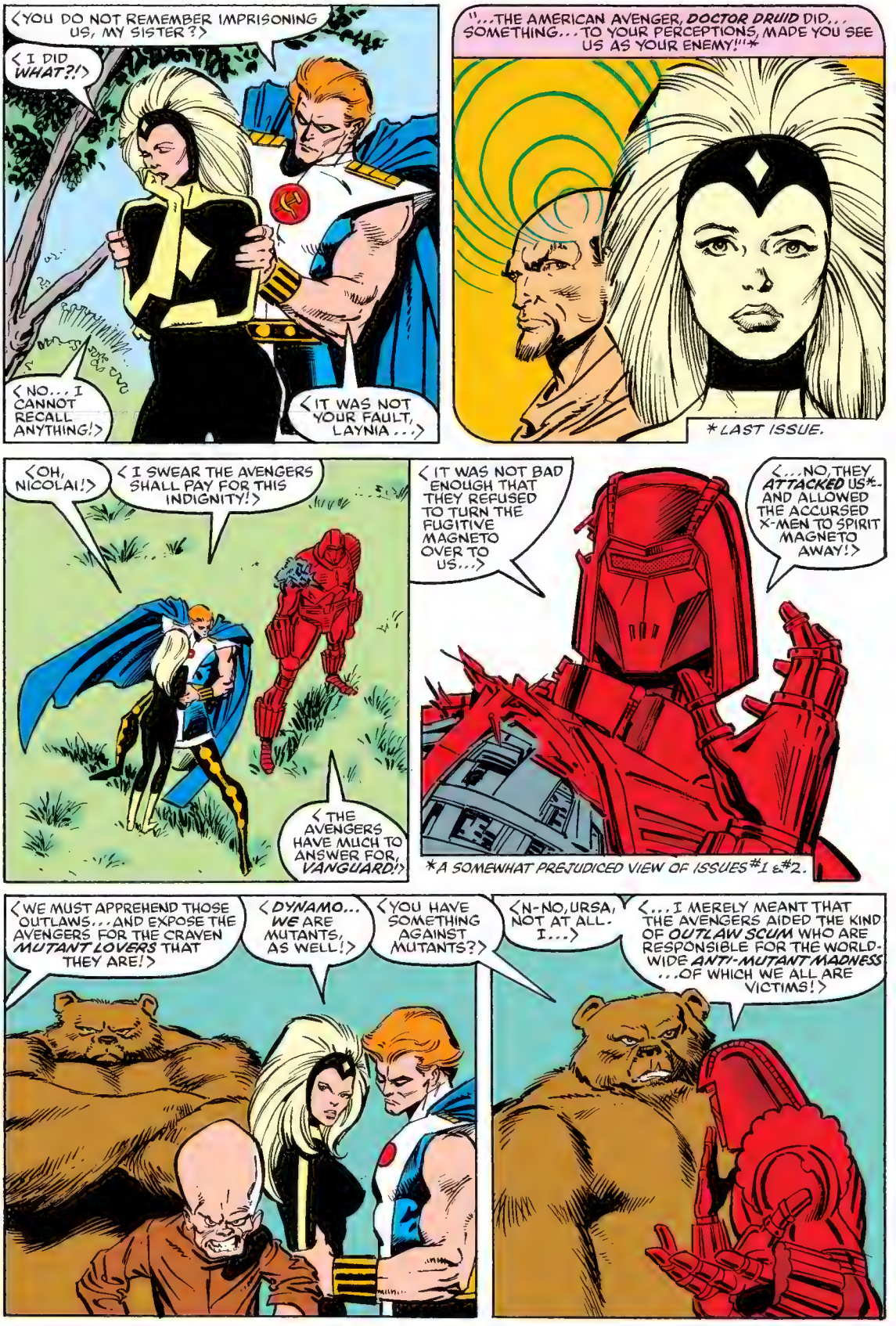

BUT AS THE BLAST POUNDS INLAND, IT SUDDENLY ENCOUNTERS RESISTANCE IN THE FORM OF A THIN, HASTILY-ERECTED MAGNETIC FORCE-SHIELD!
MUST IGNORE THE PAIN IN MY JAW. MUST CONCENTRATE...
STRUGGLING MIGHTILY TO MAINTAIN HIS SHIELD--
--MAGNETO REPELS THE DEADLY HURTLING DEBRIS OF THE EXPLODING ASTEROID FROM EVERYONE PRESENT...
...BUT THE ACCOMPANYING SHOCKWAVE SCATTERS BOTH X-MEN AND AVENGERS ALONG THE SHORE LIKE A CHILD'S DISCARDED TOYS.
THE AVENGERS' CONFUSION WILL NOT LAST LONG...
"...WE MUST FLEE BEFORE THEY CAN GATHER THEIR WITS."
I NEED HELP HERE! THE BLAST KNOCKED CAP OUT!
RIGHT WITH YOU, C.M!
THE X-MEN'S CRAFT IS ALREADY GONE FROM SIGHT!
WHERE'S DOCTOR DRUID? HEY, YOU DON'T SUPPOSE--?

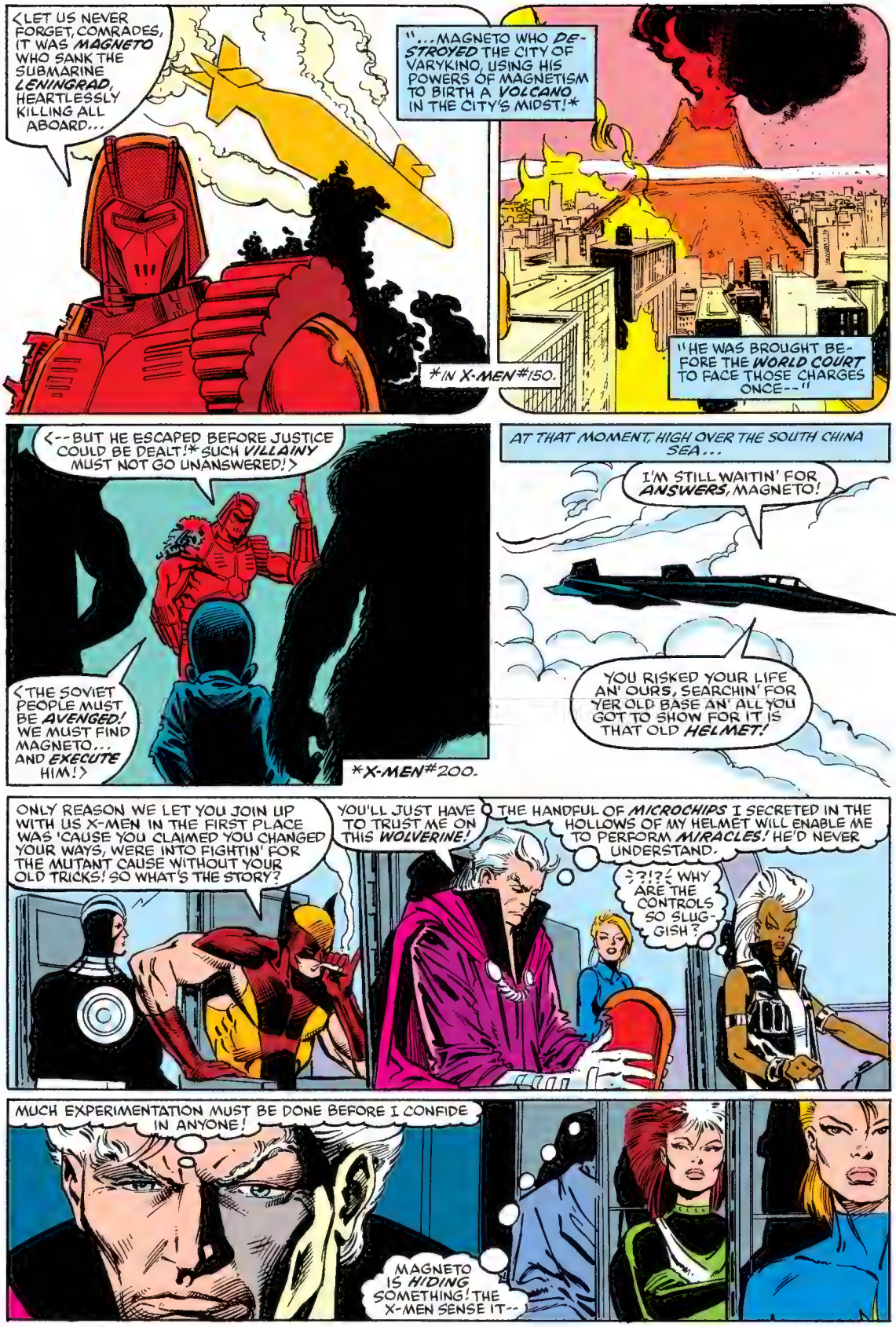

HIGH OVER THE SOUTH CHINA SEA...
I AM ONCE AGAIN IN YOUR DEBT, X-MEN. HAD YOU NOT RETURNED...
IT WAS NOT AN EASY DECISION, MAGNETO--AND YOUR ACTIONS HAVE NOT MADE IT ANY EASIER--
--BUT WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, YOU ARE A MUTANT...AS ARE WE ALL.
IT WAS BAD ENOUGH WE HAD TO FIGHT THE AVENGERS... DID WE HAVE TO RUN OFF LIKE THAT? IF THEY WERE HURT--!
THEY WERE AS WELL-SHIELDED AS WE, DAZZLER--
--THEY CAN SAVE THEMSELVES!
SOMETHIN' STILL SMELLS ABOUT THIS! WHY ARE YA WEARING THAT OLD POT ON YER HEAD AGAIN?
LOOK, I WAS WILLIN' TO KEEP YOU OUTTA THE COURTROOM, BUT YOU OWE US AN EXPLANATION, BUB!
WELL, WHEN ARE WE GONNA GET SOME STRAIGHT ANSWERS?
KEEP AFTER HIM, SHORT-STUFF! THERE'S A LOT MAGNETO'S NOT TELLING!
WHY DOESN'T THE WORLD LET UP ON MAGNETO? IT DOESN'T MATTER IF HE'S GUILTY OR NOT. THERE'S NO COURT IN THE WORLD THAT WOULDN'T HANG A MUTANT!
IT APPEARS THERE IS MUCH DISSENSION AMONGST THESE X-MEN...
...I ONLY HOPE THEY CONTINUE TO BE SO PREOCCUPIED!
I HAVE MANAGED TO MENTALLY SCREEN MY PRESENCE FROM THEM SO FAR... BUT I CANNOT DO SO INDEFINITELY.
I MUST GET WORD OF THEIR STATUS AND LOCATION TO THE AVENGERS BEFORE I AM DISCOVERED. OTHERWISE, I WILL HAVE SACRIFICED MYSELF FOR NOTHING!
NEXT ISSUE:
THE SOVIETS STRIKE BACK!

MARVEL
1987 MARVEL COMICS GROUP
3
JUNE
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE
AUTHORITY
#3 IN A FOUR-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES
THE X-MEN VS. THE AVENGERS
Silvestri/Rubinstein

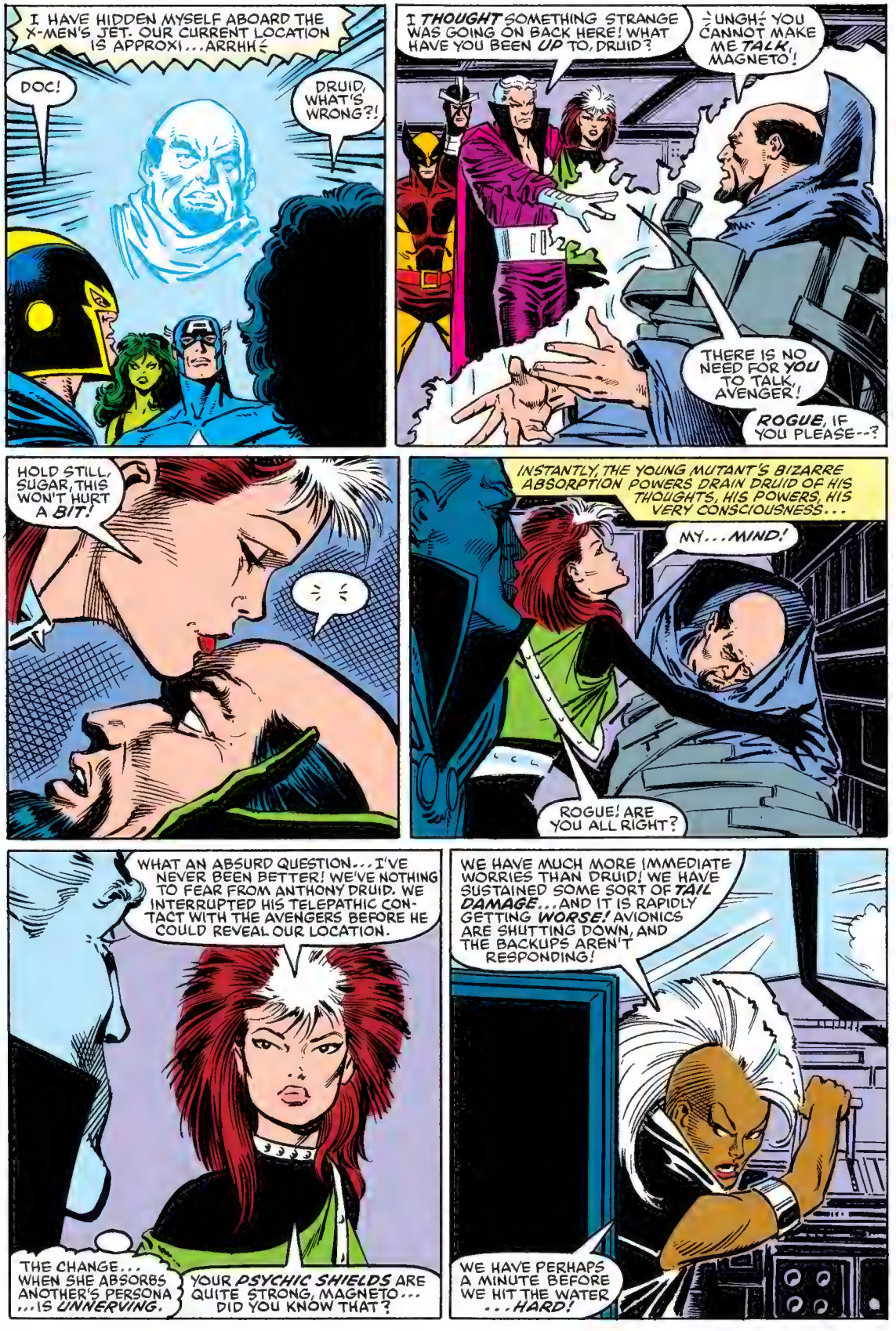

HIGH ABOVE THE WAR-TORN LANDS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA FLIES THE BAND OF MUTANT OUTCASTS KNOWN AS THE X-MEN...
...THEIR SPECIALLY MODIFIED SR-71 BLACKBIRD ROCKETING THEM AWAY FROM THE SCENE OF THEIR LATEST BATTLE WITH EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES, THE AVENGERS.
BUT THIS WILL NOT BE A SIMPLE FLIGHT. FOR TODAY...
"THE SOVIETS STRIKE BACK!"
TARGET SIGHTED... MAXIMUM MAGNIFICATION
PARTICLE BEAM PROJECTOR CHARGING... FULL POWER IN 90 SECONDS
STAN LEE PRESENTS:
ROGER STERN-Writer
MARC SILVESTRI-Penciler
JOSEF RUBINSTEIN-Inker
JOE ROSEN-Letterer
CHRISTIE SCHEELE-Colorist
MARK GRUENWALD - Editors
ANN NOCENTI
JIM SHOOTER-Editor in Chief
WARNING... TARGET MOVING OUT OF RANGE
FIRE... FIRE!!

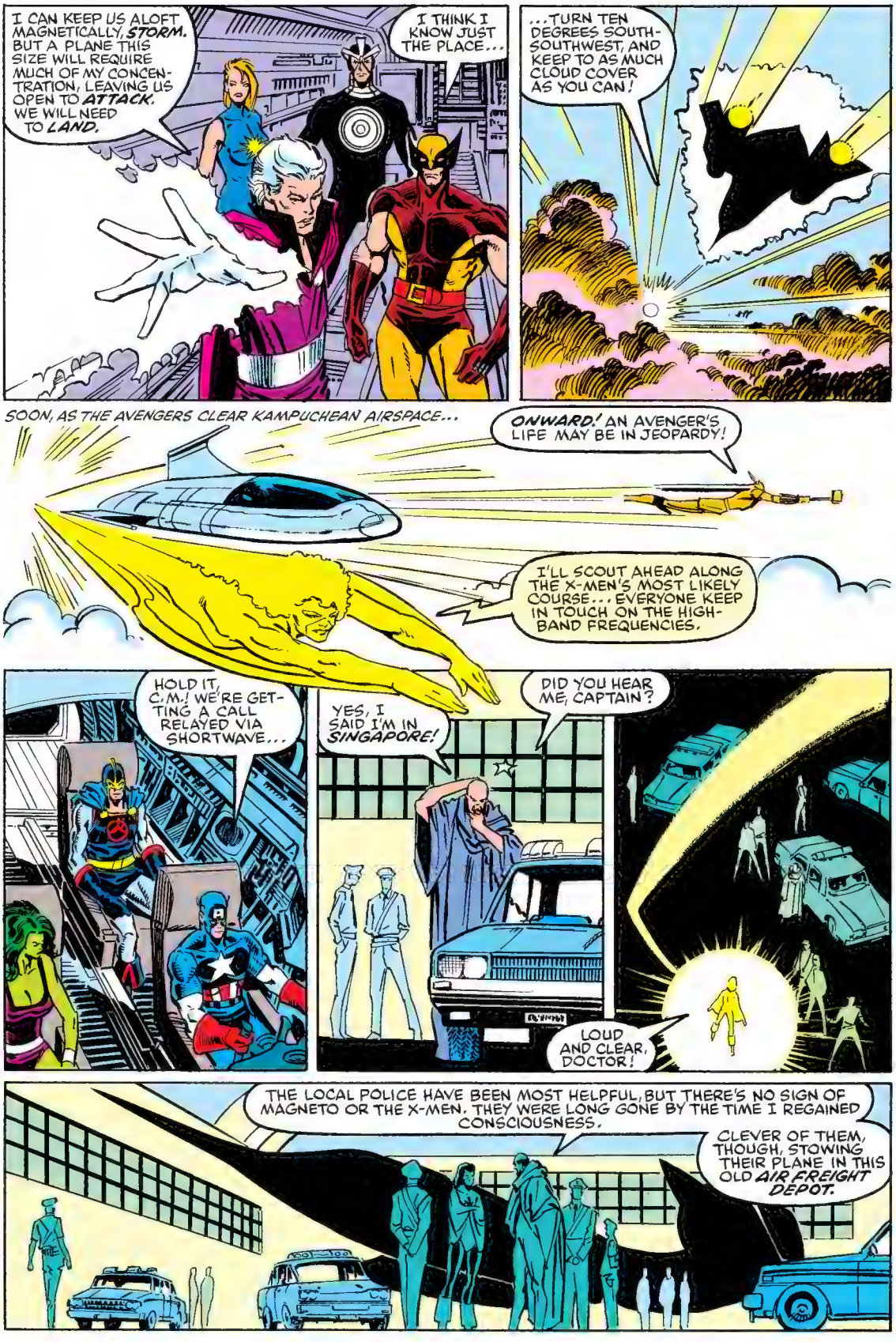

IN RESPONSE TO A DESPERATE CYBERNETIC COMMAND, AN ALL-BUT-INVISIBLE BEAM OF ENERGY SIZZLES SKYWARD...
ZEK
...FROM THE JUNGLE FAR BELOW.
<TITANIUM MAN, WHAT--?>*
<JUST A FUTILE ATTEMPT TO DOWN OUR QUARRY, COMRADES. MY ARMOR HAD BARELY POWER ENOUGH TO CLIP THEIR JET.!>
*TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN.
<DARKSTAR, YOU MUST RELEASE US!>
<SHE DOES NOT LISTEN TO HER BROTHER, URSA. WHY SHOULD SHE LISTEN TO YOU?>
<THE DYNAMO IS RIGHT, URSA. LAYNIA'S TRANCE HOLDS HER AS MUCH A CAPTIVE, AS HER DARK-FORCE HOLDS US!>
<I, HOWEVER, AM NOT A CAPTIVE OF THIS ARMOR! WORDS ALONE MAY NOT FREE HER...>
<... BUT PERHAPS A MORE PHYSICAL APPEAL CAN!>
<LAYNIA! YOU MUST AWAKEN! YOU HAVE BEEN DECEIVED!>
<UHN? G-GREMLIN?>
AS DARKSTAR ROUSES FROM HER STUPOR, THE EERIE OTHER-DIMENSIONAL FORCE-- WITH WHICH SHE'D BOUND THE OTHER SOVIET SUPER-SOLDIERS--ABRUPTLY CEASES TO BE!
WHU--!
<WHERE ARE THE AVENGERS? THE X-MEN? WHAT IS GOING ON?>

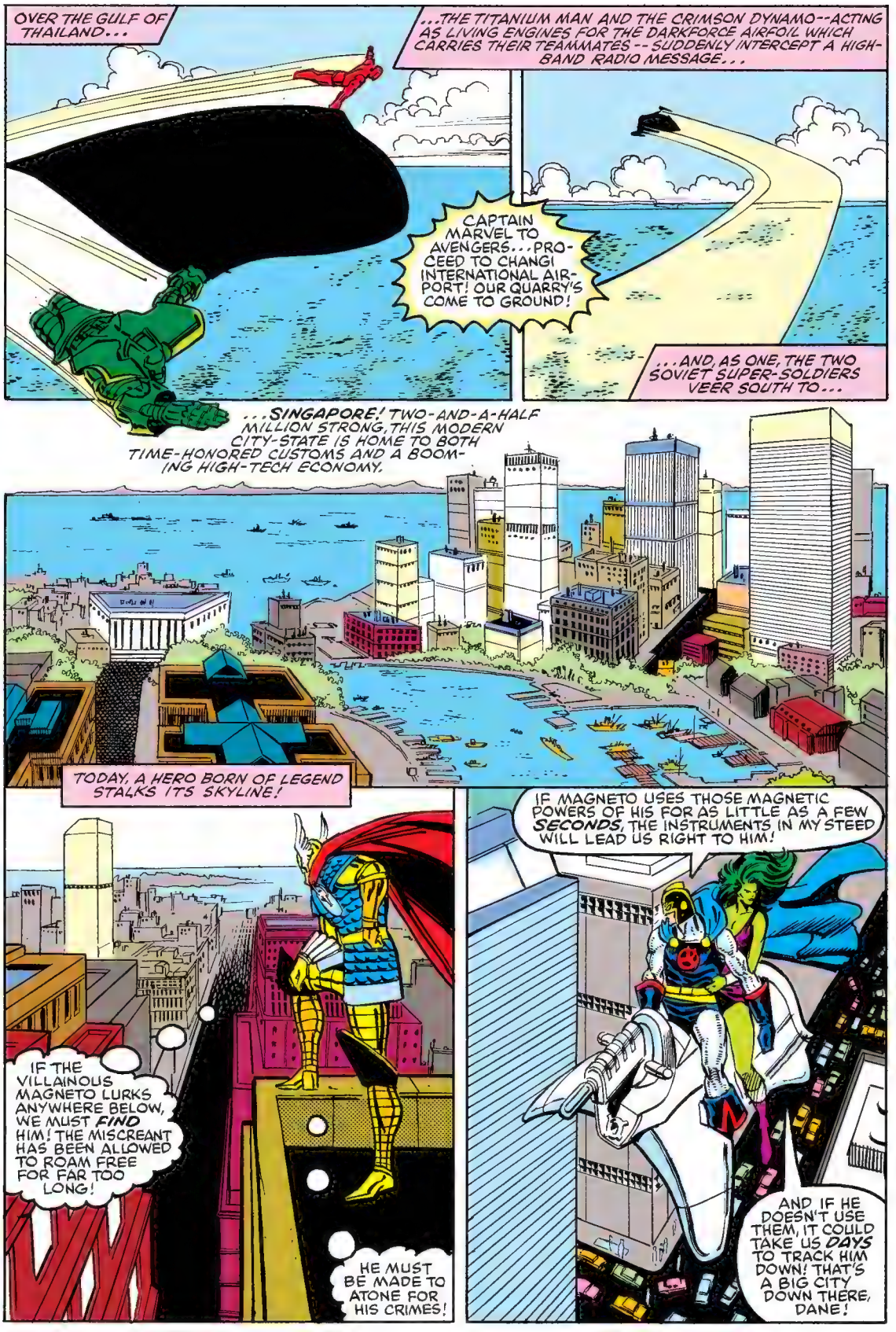

〈YOU DO NOT REMEMBER IMPRISONING US, MY SISTER?〉
〈I DID WHAT?!〉
〈NO... I CANNOT RECALL ANYTHING!〉
〈IT WAS NOT YOUR FAULT, LAYNIA...〉
"...THE AMERICAN AVENGER, DOCTOR DRUID DID... SOMETHING... TO YOUR PERCEPTIONS, MADE YOU SEE US AS YOUR ENEMY!"*
*LAST ISSUE.
〈OH, NICOLAI!〉
〈I SWEAR THE AVENGERS SHALL PAY FOR THIS INDIGNITY!〉
〈THE AVENGERS HAVE MUCH TO ANSWER FOR, VANGUARD!〉
〈IT WAS NOT BAD ENOUGH THAT THEY REFUSED TO TURN THE FUGITIVE MAGNETO OVER TO US...〉
〈...NO, THEY ATTACKED US*- AND ALLOWED THE ACCURSED X-MEN TO SPIRIT MAGNETO AWAY!〉
*A SOMEWHAT PREJUDICED VIEW OF ISSUES #1 & #2.
〈WE MUST APPREHEND THOSE OUTLAWS... AND EXPOSE THE AVENGERS FOR THE CRAVEN MUTANT LOVERS THAT THEY ARE!〉
〈DYNAMO... WE ARE MUTANTS, AS WELL!〉
〈YOU HAVE SOMETHING AGAINST MUTANTS?〉
〈N-NO, URSA, NOT AT ALL. I...〉
〈...I MERELY MEANT THAT THE AVENGERS AIDED THE KIND OF OUTLAW SCUM WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WORLD-WIDE ANTI-MUTANT MADNESS ...OF WHICH WE ALL ARE VICTIMS!〉

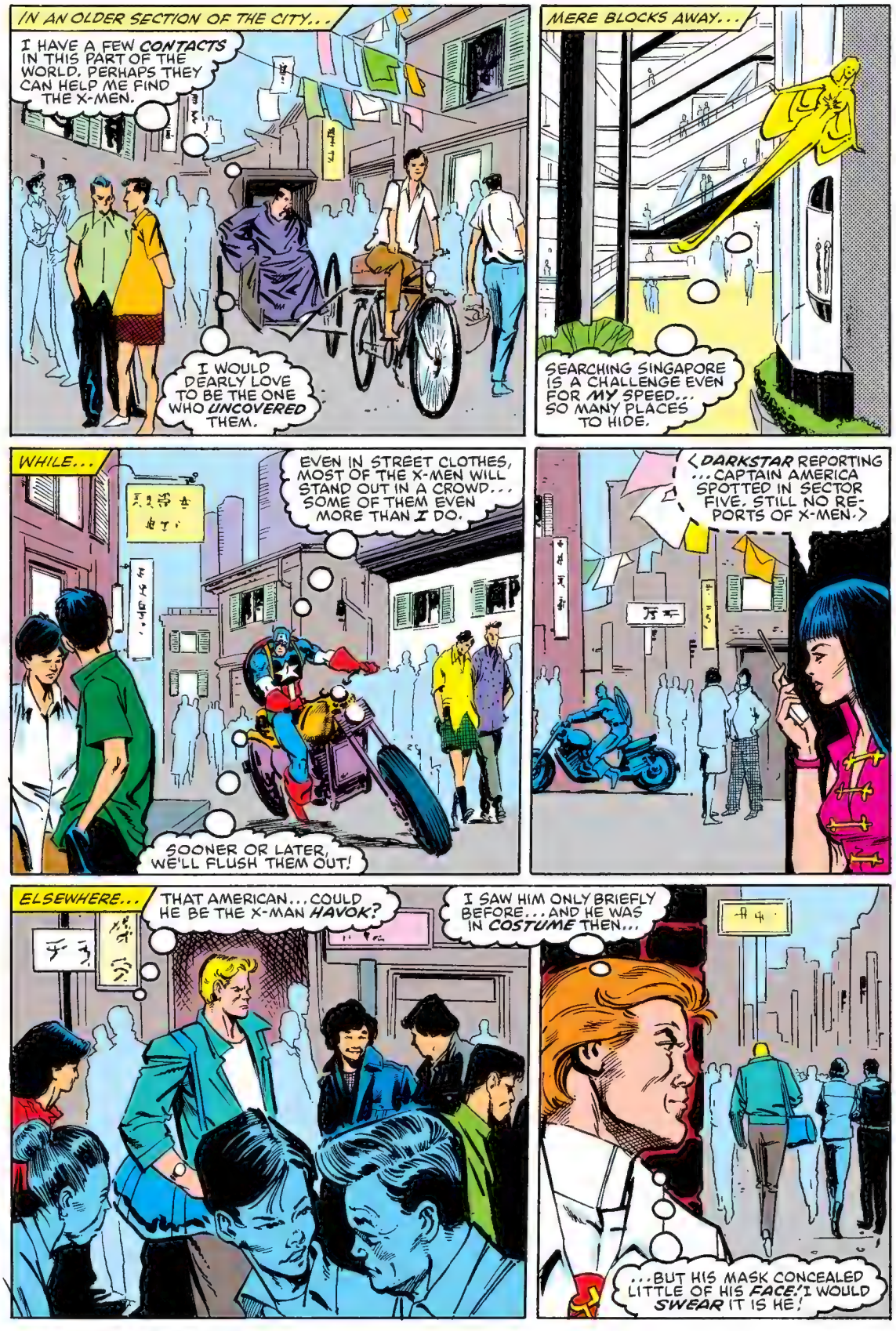

〈LET US NEVER FORGET, COMRADES, IT WAS MAGNETO WHO SANK THE SUBMARINE LENINGRAD, HEARTLESSLY KILLING ALL ABOARD...
"...MAGNETO WHO DESTROYED THE CITY OF VARYKINO, USING HIS POWERS OF MAGNETISM TO BIRTH A VOLCANO IN THE CITY'S MIDST!*
*IN X-MEN #150.
"HE WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE WORLD COURT TO FACE THOSE CHARGES ONCE--"
〈--BUT HE ESCAPED BEFORE JUSTICE COULD BE DEALT!* SUCH VILLAINY MUST NOT GO UNANSWERED!〉
〈THE SOVIET PEOPLE MUST BE AVENGED! WE MUST FIND MAGNETO... AND EXECUTE HIM!〉
*X-MEN #200.
AT THAT MOMENT, HIGH OVER THE SOUTH CHINA SEA...
I'M STILL WAITIN' FOR ANSWERS, MAGNETO!
YOU RISKED YOUR LIFE AN' OURS, SEARCHIN' FOR YER OLD BASE AN' ALL YOU GOT TO SHOW FOR IT IS THAT OLD HELMET!
ONLY REASON WE LET YOU JOIN UP WITH US X-MEN IN THE FIRST PLACE WAS 'CAUSE YOU CLAIMED YOU CHANGED YOUR WAYS, WERE INTO FIGHTIN' FOR THE MUTANT CAUSE WITHOUT YOUR OLD TRICKS! SO WHAT'S THE STORY?
YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO TRUST ME ON THIS WOLVERINE!
THE HANDFUL OF MICROCHIPS I SECRETED IN THE HOLLOWS OF MY HELMET WILL ENABLE ME TO PERFORM MIRACLES! HE'D NEVER UNDERSTAND.
〈?!?〈 WHY ARE THE CONTROLS SO SLUGGISH?
MUCH EXPERIMENTATION MUST BE DONE BEFORE I CONFIDE IN ANYONE!
MAGNETO IS HIDING SOMETHING! THE X-MEN SENSE IT--

--AS EASILY AS I, FORTUNATE, REALLY! THEIR CONCERNS MAKE IT SIMPLER TO MENTALLY MASK MY PRESENCE FROM THEM.
MAGNETO'S MIND IS A STRONG ONE, THOUGH... HE WILL DETECT ME EVENTUALLY. I MUST CONTACT THE OTHER AVENGERS. IT WILL TAKE ALL OF US TO BRING SUCH A MAN AS MAGNETO TO JUSTICE.
ALONG THE SHORES OF KAMPUCHEA'S TONLE SAP...
THE X-MEN COULD GO ANYWHERE, THOR--BUT THEY'RE PROBABLY HEADING SOUTH. ANY OTHER BEARING WOULD PUT THEM IN HOSTILE AIRSPACE.
I CONCUR, CAPTAIN AMERICA.
WHAT AIRSPACE WOULDN'T BE HOSTILE TO MAGNETO?
GOOD POINT, SHE-HULK, BUT...
...I JUST WISH I COULD FIGURE OUT WHY THE X-MEN HAVE THROWN IN WITH A MAN WHO'S TRIED IN THE PAST TO MURDER THEM. THE X-MEN I KNEW WERE HEROES...
NOTHING, KNIGHT! I'VE SEARCHED THE ENTIRE LAKEFRONT...
CAPTAIN MARVEL! WHAT'S THE WORD ON DOC?
...THERE'S NO TRACE OF DOCTOR DRUID! EVEN IF WE WERE CAUGHT IN THE EXPLOSION OF MAGNETO'S ASTEROID BASE--
--THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN SOME SIGN.
DON'T COUNT DOC OUT YET! I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF HE WENT AFTER THE X-MEN ON HIS OWN!
YOU ARE VERY NEARLY CORRECT, BLACK KNIGHT!
BLAZES, THAT'S DRUID! BUT WHERE--?

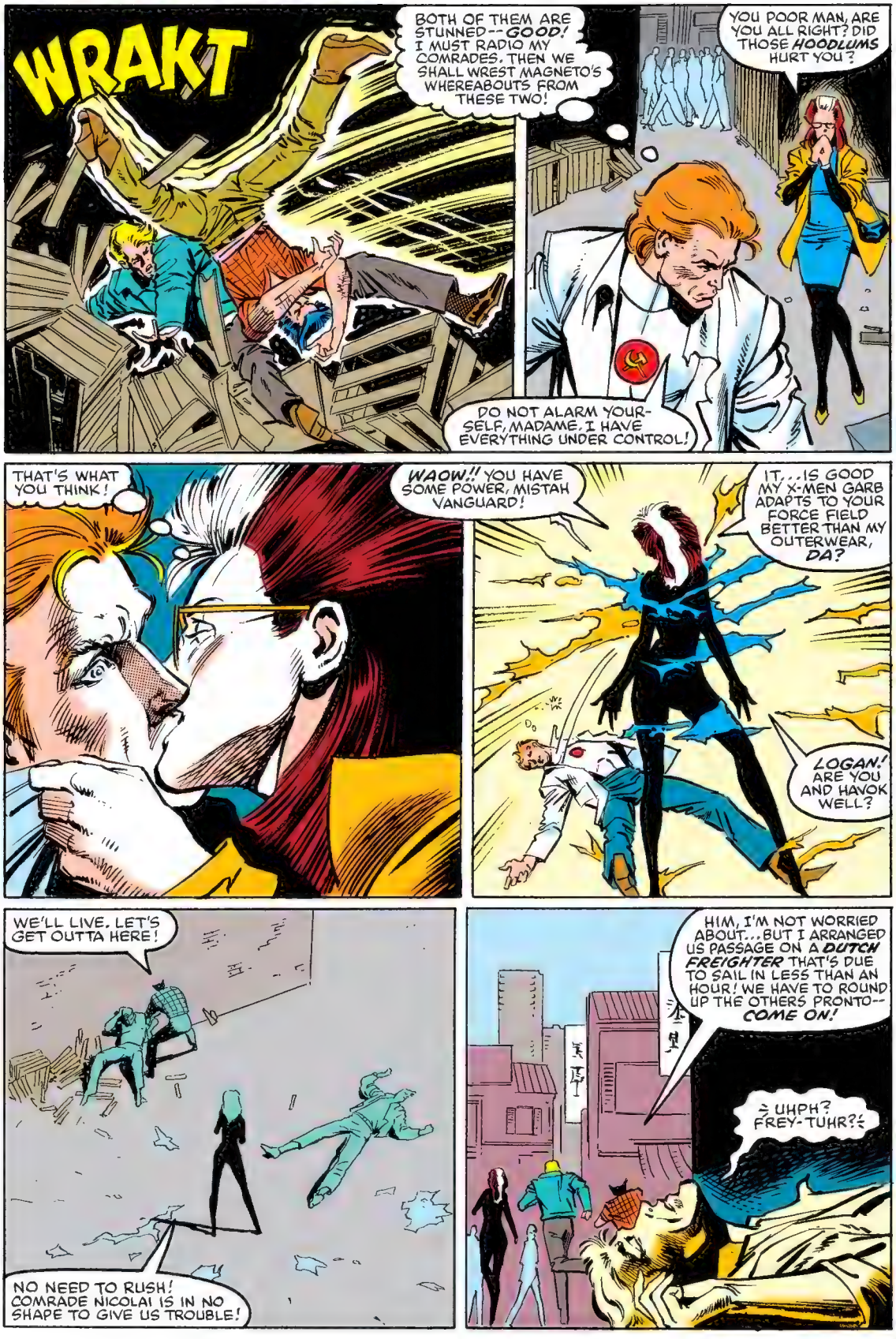

I HAVE HIDDEN MYSELF ABOARD THE X-MEN'S JET. OUR CURRENT LOCATION IS APPROXI...ARRHH!
DOC!
DRUID, WHAT'S WRONG?!
I THOUGHT SOMETHING STRANGE WAS GOING ON BACK HERE! WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO, DRUID?
!UNGH! YOU CANNOT MAKE ME TALK, MAGNETO!
THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO TALK, AVENGER!
ROGUE, IF YOU PLEASE--?
HOLD STILL, SUGAR, THIS WON'T HURT A BIT!
!!
INSTANTLY, THE YOUNG MUTANT'S BIZARRE ABSORPTION POWERS DRAIN DRUID OF HIS THOUGHTS, HIS POWERS, HIS VERY CONSCIOUSNESS...
MY...MIND!
ROGUE! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
WHAT AN ABSURD QUESTION...I'VE NEVER BEEN BETTER! WE'VE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM ANTHONY DRUID. WE INTERRUPTED HIS TELEPATHIC CONTACT WITH THE AVENGERS BEFORE HE COULD REVEAL OUR LOCATION.
THE CHANGE... WHEN SHE ABSORBS ANOTHER'S PERSONA ...IS UNNERVING.
YOUR PSYCHIC SHIELDS ARE QUITE STRONG, MAGNETO... DID YOU KNOW THAT?
WE HAVE MUCH MORE IMMEDIATE WORRIES THAN DRUID! WE HAVE SUSTAINED SOME SORT OF TAIL DAMAGE...AND IT IS RAPIDLY GETTING WORSE! AVIONICS ARE SHUTTING DOWN, AND THE BACKUPS AREN'T RESPONDING!
WE HAVE PERHAPS A MINUTE BEFORE WE HIT THE WATER ...HARD!

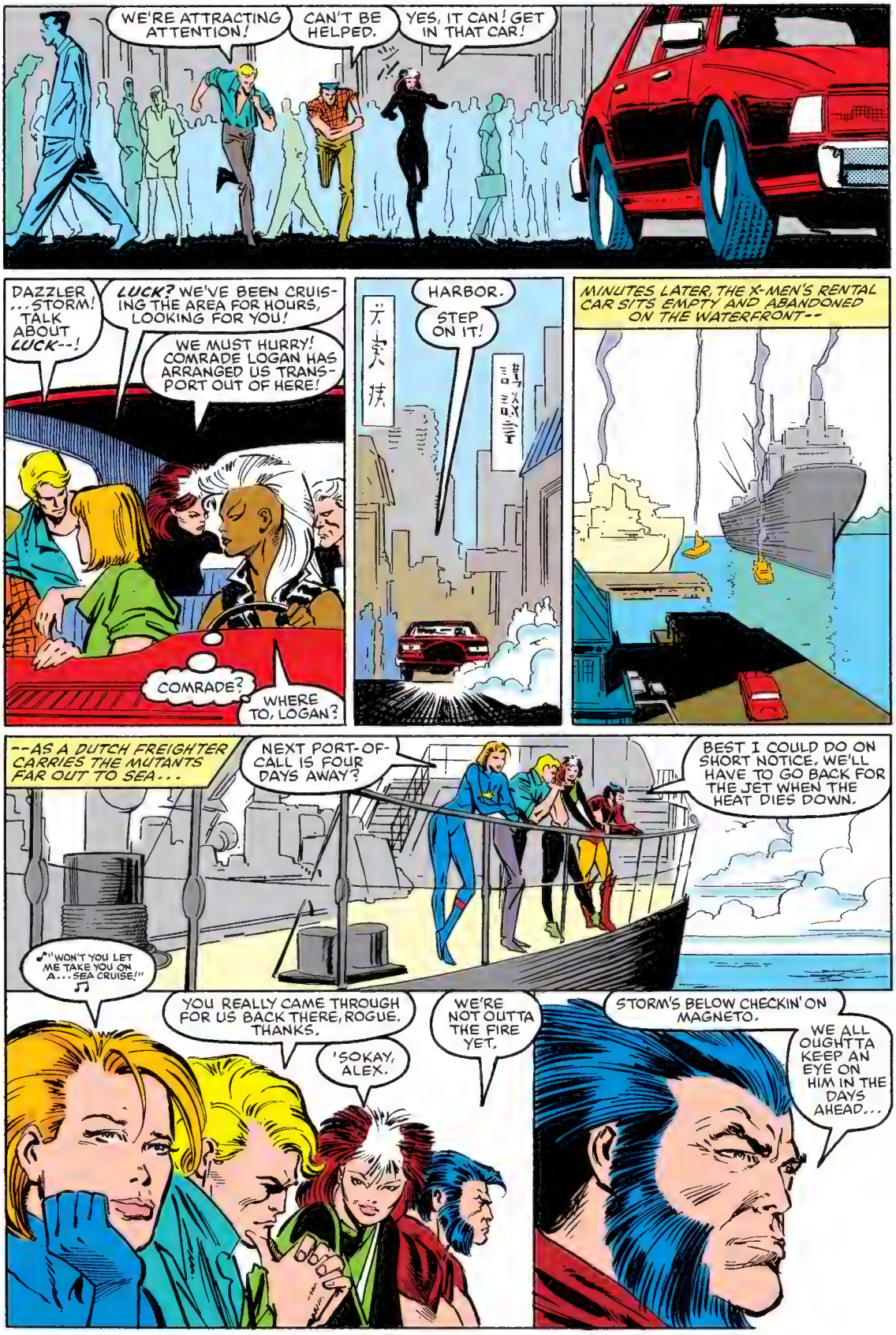

I CAN KEEP US ALOFT MAGNETICALLY, STORM. BUT A PLANE THIS SIZE WILL REQUIRE MUCH OF MY CONCENTRATION, LEAVING US OPEN TO ATTACK. WE WILL NEED TO LAND.
I THINK I KNOW JUST THE PLACE...
...TURN TEN DEGREES SOUTH-SOUTHWEST, AND KEEP TO AS MUCH CLOUD COVER AS YOU CAN!
SOON, AS THE AVENGERS CLEAR KAMPUCHEAN AIRSPACE...
ONWARD! AN AVENGER'S LIFE MAY BE IN JEOPARDY!
I'LL SCOUT AHEAD ALONG THE X-MEN'S MOST LIKELY COURSE... EVERYONE KEEP IN TOUCH ON THE HIGH-BAND FREQUENCIES.
HOLD IT, C.M.! WE'RE GETTING A CALL RELAYED VIA SHORTWAVE...
YES, I SAID I'M IN SINGAPORE!
DID YOU HEAR ME, CAPTAIN?
LOUD AND CLEAR, DOCTOR!
THE LOCAL POLICE HAVE BEEN MOST HELPFUL, BUT THERE'S NO SIGN OF MAGNETO OR THE X-MEN. THEY WERE LONG GONE BY THE TIME I REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.
CLEVER OF THEM, THOUGH, STOWING THEIR PLANE IN THIS OLD AIR FREIGHT DEPOT.

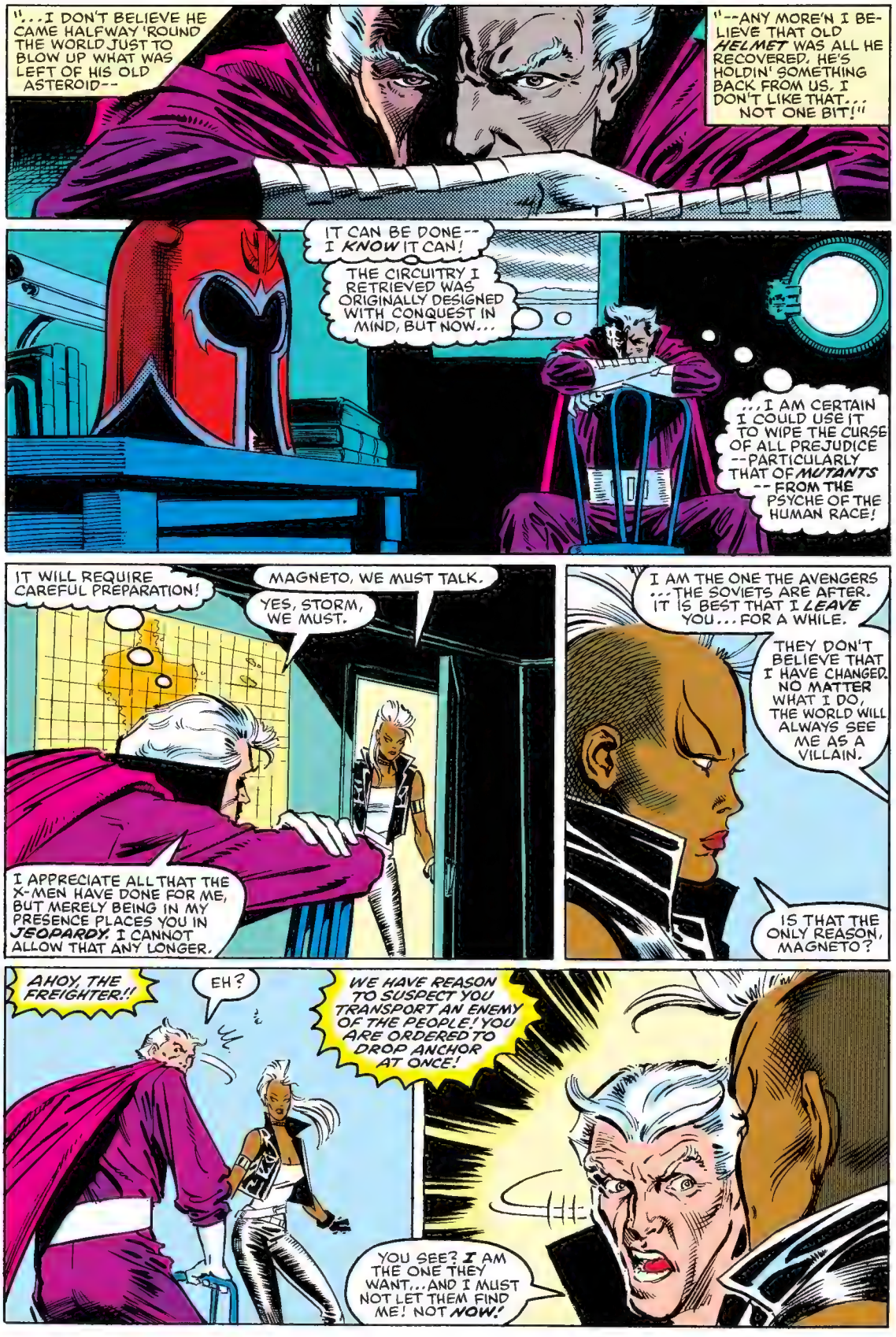

OVER THE GULF OF THAILAND...
...THE TITANIUM MAN AND THE CRIMSON DYNAMO--ACTING AS LIVING ENGINES FOR THE DARKFORCE AIRFOIL WHICH CARRIES THEIR TEAMMATES -- SUDDENLY INTERCEPT A HIGH-BAND RADIO MESSAGE...
CAPTAIN MARVEL TO AVENGERS...PROCEED TO CHANGI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT! OUR QUARRY'S COME TO GROUND!
...AND, AS ONE, THE TWO SOVIET SUPER-SOLDIERS VEER SOUTH TO...
...SINGAPORE! TWO-AND-A-HALF MILLION STRONG, THIS MODERN CITY-STATE IS HOME TO BOTH TIME-HONORED CUSTOMS AND A BOOMING HIGH-TECH ECONOMY.
TODAY, A HERO BORN OF LEGEND STALKS ITS SKYLINE!
IF THE VILLAINOUS MAGNETO LURKS ANYWHERE BELOW, WE MUST FIND HIM! THE MISCREANT HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO ROAM FREE FOR FAR TOO LONG!
HE MUST BE MADE TO ATONE FOR HIS CRIMES!
IF MAGNETO USES THOSE MAGNETIC POWERS OF HIS FOR AS LITTLE AS A FEW SECONDS, THE INSTRUMENTS IN MY STEED WILL LEAD US RIGHT TO HIM!
AND IF HE DOESN'T USE THEM, IT COULD TAKE US DAYS TO TRACK HIM DOWN! THAT'S A BIG CITY DOWN THERE, DANE!


IN AN OLDER SECTION OF THE CITY...
I HAVE A FEW CONTACTS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. PERHAPS THEY CAN HELP ME FIND THE X-MEN.
I WOULD DEARLY LOVE TO BE THE ONE WHO UNCOVERED THEM.
MERE BLOCKS AWAY...
SEARCHING SINGAPORE IS A CHALLENGE EVEN FOR MY SPEED... SO MANY PLACES TO HIDE.
WHILE...
EVEN IN STREET CLOTHES, MOST OF THE X-MEN WILL STAND OUT IN A CROWD... SOME OF THEM EVEN MORE THAN I DO.
SOONER OR LATER, WE'LL FLUSH THEM OUT!
<DARKSTAR REPORTING ...CAPTAIN AMERICA SPOTTED IN SECTOR FIVE. STILL NO REPORTS OF X-MEN.>
ELSEWHERE...
THAT AMERICAN... COULD HE BE THE X-MAN HAVOK?
I SAW HIM ONLY BRIEFLY BEFORE... AND HE WAS IN COSTUME THEN...
...BUT HIS MASK CONCEALED LITTLE OF HIS FACE! I WOULD SWEAR IT IS HE!

EXCUSE ME, I SEEM TO HAVE GOTTEN TURNED AROUND. I WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET SOMEONE...
I MUST MAKE CERTAIN...
LOOKIN' FOR SOMEBODY, BUB?
?!!!
I'D KNOW YOUR SCENT ANYWHERE, YOU'RE ONE O' THOSE RUSSKIES!
AND YOU CAN ONLY BE THE OUTLAW WOLVERINE! THERE COULD NOT BE TWO MEN WITH SO COARSE A VOICE!
HR-R-RIP
LOGAN? WHAT--?
NOTHIN' TO WORRY ABOUT, COLLEGE BOY!
SNIKT
SNIKT
YOU THINK TO FRIGHTEN ME WITH YOUR MUCH VAUNTED ADAMANTIUM CLAWS?
HAH! I LAUGH AT YOU!
NO ONE TOUCHES THE VANGUARD AGAINST HIS WISHES!


WRAKT
BOTH OF THEM ARE STUNNED--GOOD! I MUST RADIO MY COMRADES, THEN WE SHALL WREST MAGNETO'S WHEREABOUTS FROM THESE TWO!
YOU POOR MAN, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? DID THOSE HOODLUMS HURT YOU?
DO NOT ALARM YOURSELF, MADAME. I HAVE EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL!
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK!
WAOW!! YOU HAVE SOME POWER, MISTAH VANGUARD!
IT...IS GOOD MY X-MEN GARB ADAPTS TO YOUR FORCE FIELD BETTER THAN MY OUTERWEAR, DA?
LOGAN! ARE YOU AND HAVOK WELL?
WE'LL LIVE. LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!
NO NEED TO RUSH! COMRADE NICOLAI IS IN NO SHAPE TO GIVE US TROUBLE!
HIM, I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT...BUT I ARRANGED US PASSAGE ON A DUTCH FREIGHTER THAT'S DUE TO SAIL IN LESS THAN AN HOUR! WE HAVE TO ROUND UP THE OTHERS PRONTO--COME ON!
UHPH? FREY-TUHR?

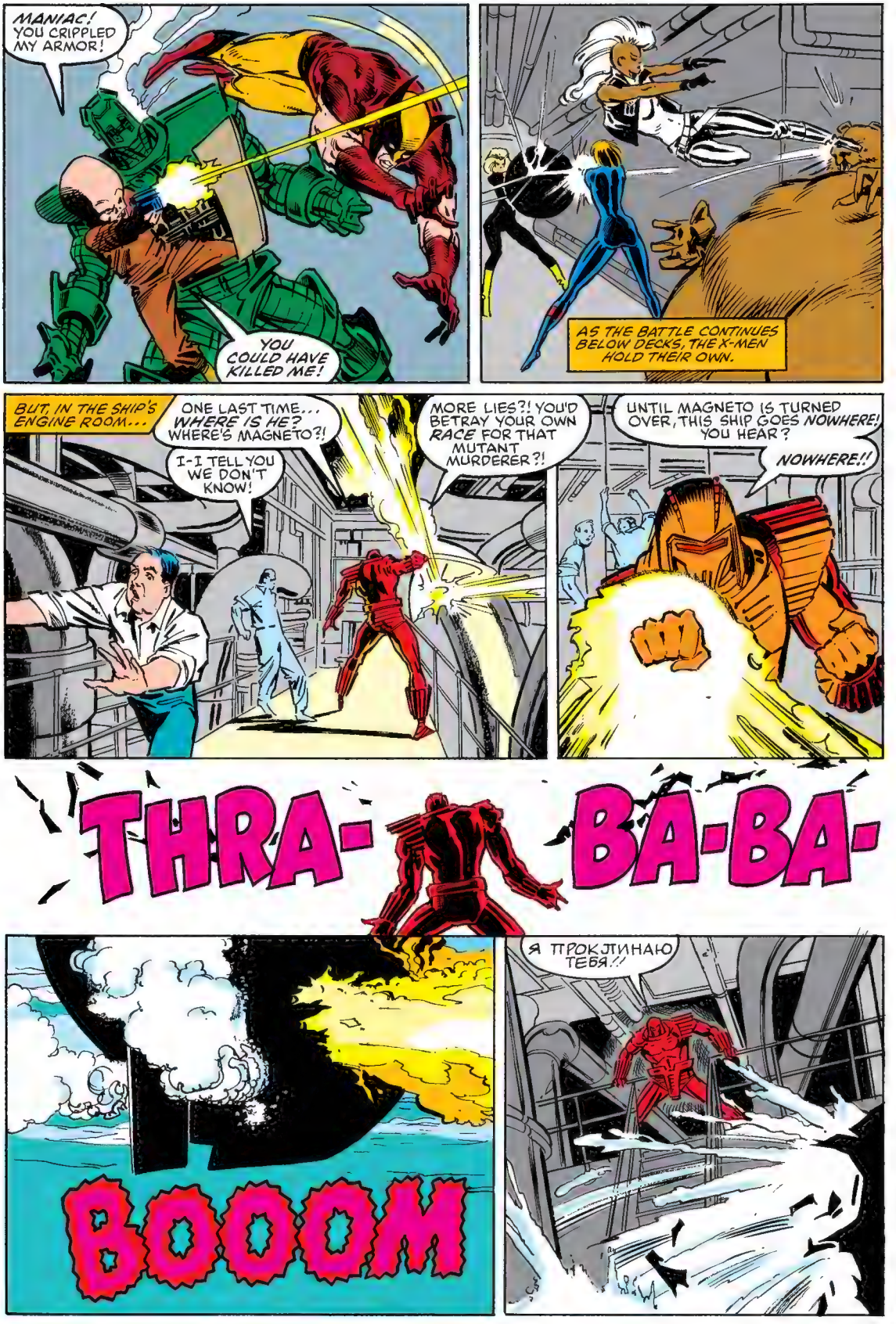

WE'RE ATTRACTING ATTENTION!
CAN'T BE HELPED.
YES, IT CAN! GET IN THAT CAR!
DAZZLER ...STORM! TALK ABOUT LUCK--!
LUCK? WE'VE BEEN CRUISING THE AREA FOR HOURS, LOOKING FOR YOU!
WE MUST HURRY! COMRADE LOGAN HAS ARRANGED US TRANSPORT OUT OF HERE!
COMRADE?
WHERE TO, LOGAN?
HARBOR.
STEP ON IT!
MINUTES LATER, THE X-MEN'S RENTAL CAR SITS EMPTY AND ABANDONED ON THE WATERFRONT--
--AS A DUTCH FREIGHTER CARRIES THE MUTANTS FAR OUT TO SEA...
NEXT PORT-OF-CALL IS FOUR DAYS AWAY?
BEST I COULD DO ON SHORT NOTICE. WE'LL HAVE TO GO BACK FOR THE JET WHEN THE HEAT DIES DOWN.
♪"WON'T YOU LET ME TAKE YOU ON A...SEA CRUISE!" ♫
YOU REALLY CAME THROUGH FOR US BACK THERE, ROGUE. THANKS.
'SOKAY, ALEX.
WE'RE NOT OUTTA THE FIRE YET.
STORM'S BELOW CHECKIN' ON MAGNETO.
WE ALL OUGHTTA KEEP AN EYE ON HIM IN THE DAYS AHEAD...

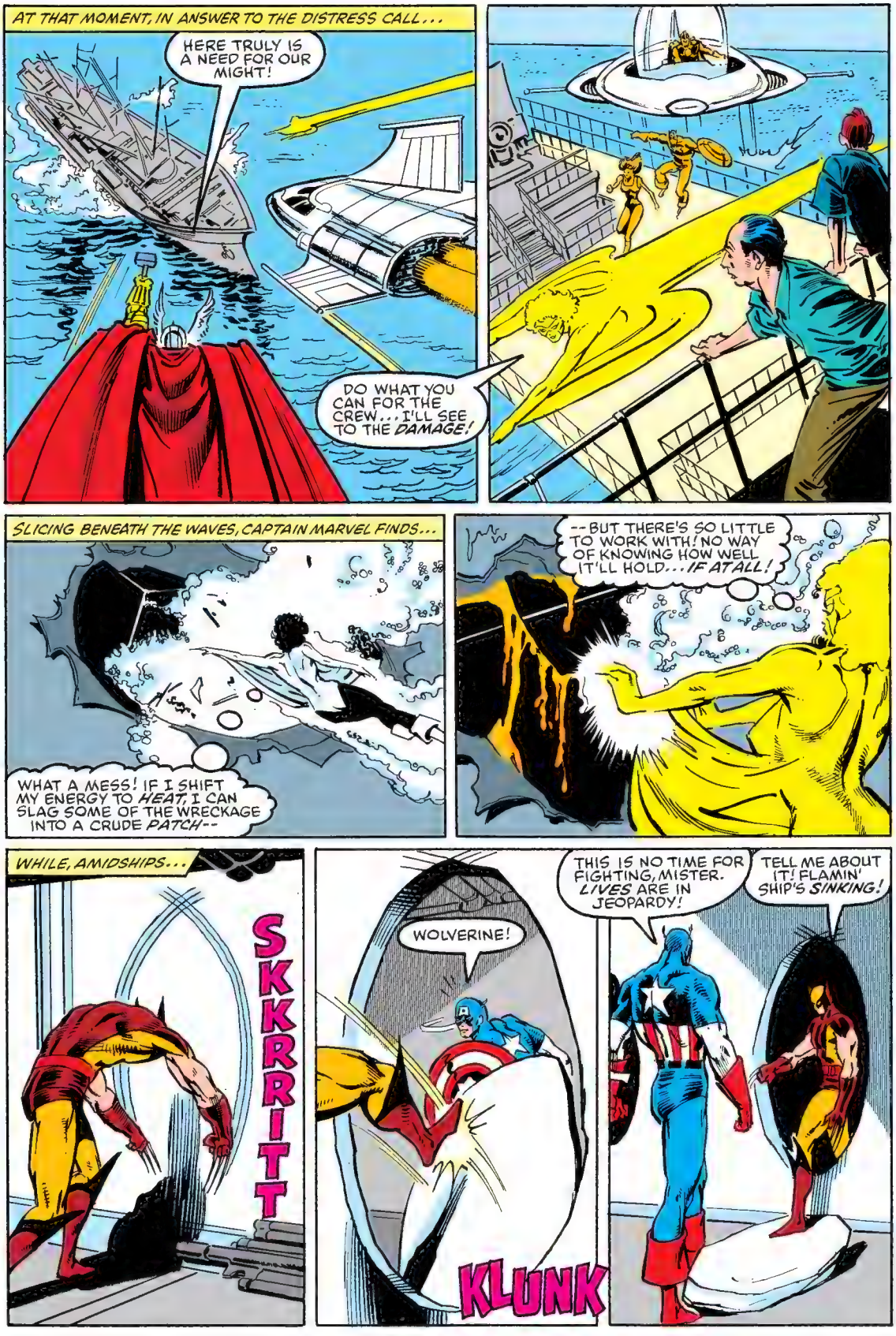

"...I DON'T BELIEVE HE CAME HALFWAY 'ROUND THE WORLD JUST TO BLOW UP WHAT WAS LEFT OF HIS OLD ASTEROID--
"--ANY MORE'N I BELIEVE THAT OLD HELMET WAS ALL HE RECOVERED. HE'S HOLDIN' SOMETHING BACK FROM US. I DON'T LIKE THAT... NOT ONE BIT!"
IT CAN BE DONE-- I KNOW IT CAN!
THE CIRCUITRY I RETRIEVED WAS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED WITH CONQUEST IN MIND, BUT NOW...
...I AM CERTAIN I COULD USE IT TO WIPE THE CURSE OF ALL PREJUDICE --PARTICULARLY THAT OF MUTANTS -- FROM THE PSYCHE OF THE HUMAN RACE!
IT WILL REQUIRE CAREFUL PREPARATION!
MAGNETO, WE MUST TALK.
YES, STORM, WE MUST.
I APPRECIATE ALL THAT THE X-MEN HAVE DONE FOR ME, BUT MERELY BEING IN MY PRESENCE PLACES YOU IN JEOPARDY. I CANNOT ALLOW THAT ANY LONGER.
I AM THE ONE THE AVENGERS ...THE SOVIETS ARE AFTER. IT IS BEST THAT I LEAVE YOU... FOR A WHILE.
THEY DON'T BELIEVE THAT I HAVE CHANGED. NO MATTER WHAT I DO, THE WORLD WILL ALWAYS SEE ME AS A VILLAIN.
IS THAT THE ONLY REASON, MAGNETO?
AHOY, THE FREIGHTER!!
EH?
WE HAVE REASON TO SUSPECT YOU TRANSPORT AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE! YOU ARE ORDERED TO DROP ANCHOR AT ONCE!
YOU SEE? I AM THE ONE THEY WANT...AND I MUST NOT LET THEM FIND ME! NOT NOW!

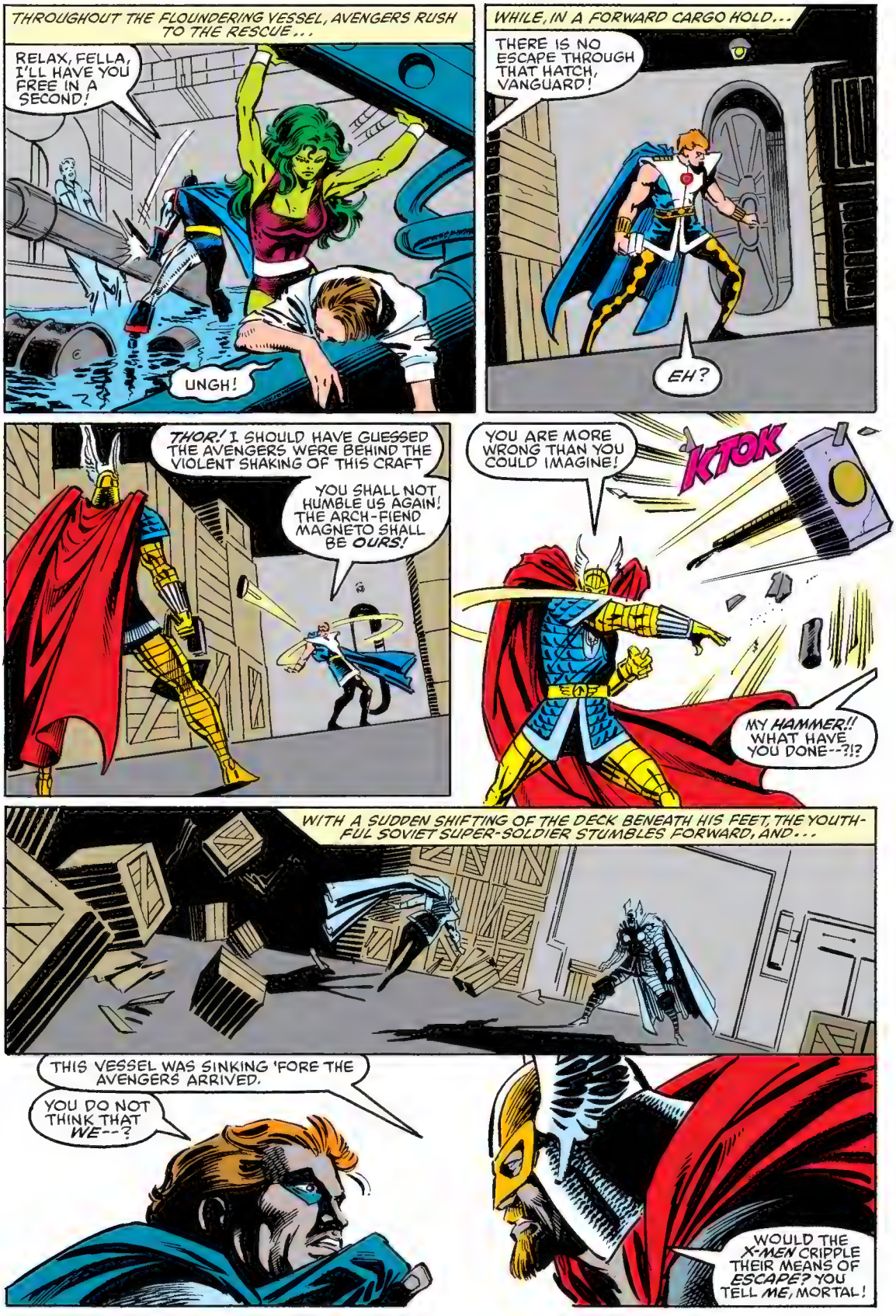
YOU OVERHEARD THE X-MEN CORRECTLY, VANGUARD! THERE THEY ARE... ON DECK!
X-MEN... PRODUCE MAGNETO AT ONCE, OR WE WILL ARREST YOU IN THE NAME OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS!
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO BOARD THIS SHIP!
BETTER MOVE ON, PALS. WE GOT PLACES TO GO.
ANSWER US! DO YOU HAVE MAGNETO ON BOARD?!
SEARCH THE SHIP, COMRADES... TOP TO BOTTOM!
HOLD IT, BUB. WHERE DO YOU GET OFF BOARDIN' A DUTCH SHIP? YOU'RE BREAKIN' THE LAWS OF THE SEA--
HERE IS THE LAW!
ZKOW

BIG MISTAKE, TIN MAN! YOU'RE NOT FIGHTING JUST ONE X-MAN!
UNNGH!
YOU THINK US UNFAMILIAR WITH THE CONCEPT OF LOYALTY, AMERICAN?
I WISH WITH ALL MY HEART THAT THIS WERE NOT NECESSARY--WE, TOO, ARE MUTANTS, SAVE FOR THE DYNAMO. WHY MUST YOU BRING THIS UPON YOURSELVES?
WE DIDN'T SWING THE FIRST PUNCH!
SEEMS TO ME, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO SEE THE LIGHT!
AAARRGH!
LAYNIA! IF YOU'VE HARMED HER--?
WATCH OUT FOR YOUR OWN HIDE, VANGUARD!
BAH! YOU WILL NOT TAKE ME BY SURPRISE AGAIN, ROGUE! THE POWERS YOU STOLE--
--ARE AGAIN MINE!
BOOM

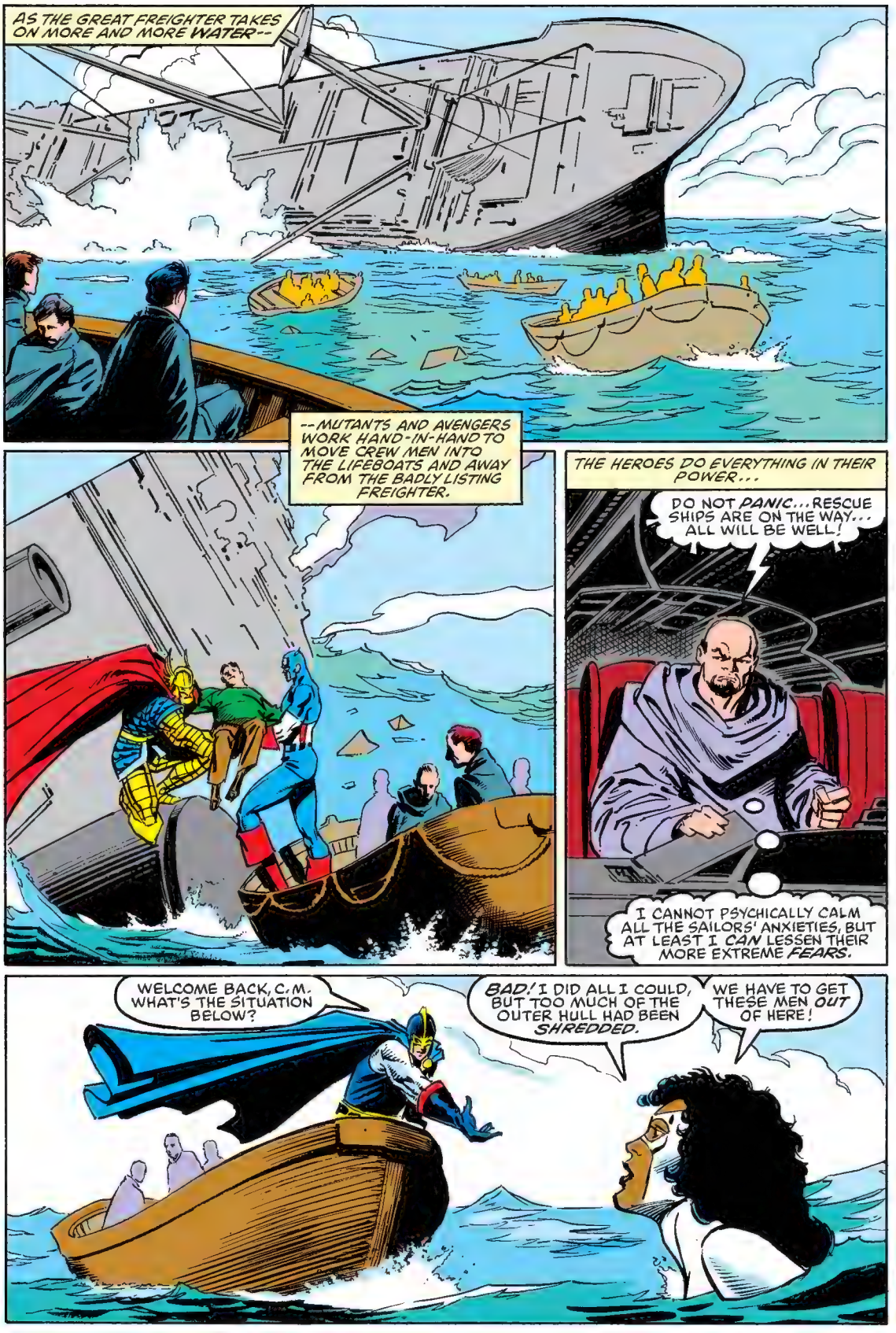
DIDN'T REALIZE...SHE WAS FLYING... SO FAST! WASN'T BRACED FOR SUCH A RECOIL!
<NICOLAI! WHAT--?>
<I WILL... BE FINE, MIKHAIL.>
WHILE, CLAMBERING UP THE SHIP'S PORT SIDE...
OKAY, RUSSKIES... THIS IS WAR!
SEND OUT A DISTRESS CALL...ALL CHANNELS... ON THE DOUBLE!
AYE, SIR!
DYNAMO! HAVE A CARE HOW YOU USE YOUR ELECTRICAL BLASTS! THERE ARE INNOCENTS ABOARD!
NO ONE WHO SHELTERS MAGNETO IS INNOCENT!
GOIN' SOMEWHERE, BUB?
NOT IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY 'BOUT IT!


MANIAC! YOU CRIPPLED MY ARMOR!
YOU COULD HAVE KILLED ME!
AS THE BATTLE CONTINUES BELOW DECKS, THE X-MEN HOLD THEIR OWN.
BUT, IN THE SHIP'S ENGINE ROOM...
ONE LAST TIME... WHERE IS HE? WHERE'S MAGNETO?!
I-I TELL YOU WE DON'T KNOW!
MORE LIES?! YOU'D BETRAY YOUR OWN RACE FOR THAT MUTANT MURDERER?!
UNTIL MAGNETO IS TURNED OVER, THIS SHIP GOES NOWHERE! YOU HEAR?
NOWHERE!!
THRA-
BA-BA-
BOOOM
Я ПРОКЛИНАЮ ТЕБЯ!!


AT THAT MOMENT, IN ANSWER TO THE DISTRESS CALL...
HERE TRULY IS A NEED FOR OUR MIGHT!
DO WHAT YOU CAN FOR THE CREW... I'LL SEE TO THE DAMAGE!
SLICING BENEATH THE WAVES, CAPTAIN MARVEL FINDS...
WHAT A MESS! IF I SHIFT MY ENERGY TO HEAT, I CAN SLAG SOME OF THE WRECKAGE INTO A CRUDE PATCH--
--BUT THERE'S SO LITTLE TO WORK WITH! NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW WELL IT'LL HOLD... IF AT ALL!
WHILE, AMIDSHIPS...
SKKRRITT
WOLVERINE!
KLUNK
THIS IS NO TIME FOR FIGHTING, MISTER. LIVES ARE IN JEOPARDY!
TELL ME ABOUT IT! FLAMIN' SHIP'S SINKING!


THROUGHOUT THE FLOUNDERING VESSEL, AVENGERS RUSH TO THE RESCUE...
RELAX, FELLA, I'LL HAVE YOU FREE IN A SECOND!
UNGH!
WHILE, IN A FORWARD CARGO HOLD...
THERE IS NO ESCAPE THROUGH THAT HATCH, VANGUARD!
EH?
THOR! I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED THE AVENGERS WERE BEHIND THE VIOLENT SHAKING OF THIS CRAFT
YOU SHALL NOT HUMBLE US AGAIN! THE ARCH-FIEND MAGNETO SHALL BE OURS!
YOU ARE MORE WRONG THAN YOU COULD IMAGINE!
KTOK
MY HAMMER!! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE--?!?
WITH A SUDDEN SHIFTING OF THE DECK BENEATH HIS FEET, THE YOUTHFUL SOVIET SUPER-SOLDIER STUMBLES FORWARD, AND...
THIS VESSEL WAS SINKING 'FORE THE AVENGERS ARRIVED.
YOU DO NOT THINK THAT WE--?
WOULD THE X-MEN CRIPPLE THEIR MEANS OF ESCAPE? YOU TELL ME, MORTAL!

WHILE, IN A LOWER SECTION...
JUST ONE MORE, HAVOK, AND THEN WE'RE OUTTA HERE!
HUWAUGH! HELP...ME...
LOOKS LIKE I SPOKE TOO SOON!
KAFF-KAFF
C'MERE, HAIRY! EASY DOES IT!
YOU...ARE HELPING ME?
LOOKS LIKE IT. THOUGH I DOUBT I COULD DO MUCH GOOD...
...IF SHE-HULK WEREN'T PROVIDING MOST OF THE LIFT!
HEY, WHAT'S THE HANG-UP?
OH, GREAT! THIS FURBALL IS TOO DARNED BIG TO FIT THROUGH THE HATCH!
WE'LL HAVE TO WIDEN IT!
THAT...IS NOT NECESSARY. ALLOW ME BUT A MOMENT... AND I WILL RESUME HUMAN FORM!
WHY DIDN'T YOU DO THAT BEFORE--?
I AM... VULNERABLE ...THIS WAY.
NO KIDDING.


AS THE GREAT FREIGHTER TAKES ON MORE AND MORE WATER--
--MUTANTS AND AVENGERS WORK HAND-IN-HAND TO MOVE CREW MEN INTO THE LIFEBOATS AND AWAY FROM THE BADLY LISTING FREIGHTER.
THE HEROES DO EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER...
DO NOT PANIC...RESCUE SHIPS ARE ON THE WAY... ALL WILL BE WELL!
I CANNOT PSYCHICALLY CALM ALL THE SAILORS' ANXIETIES, BUT AT LEAST I CAN LESSEN THEIR MORE EXTREME FEARS.
WELCOME BACK, C.M. WHAT'S THE SITUATION BELOW?
BAD! I DID ALL I COULD, BUT TOO MUCH OF THE OUTER HULL HAD BEEN SHREDDED.
WE HAVE TO GET THESE MEN OUT OF HERE!

IN MINUTES, THERE IS BUT A HANDFUL LEFT TO SAVE...
NO NEED TO CROWD, COMRADES--THERE IS ROOM ENOUGH FOR ALL!
AS THE FREIGHTER'S STARBOARD SIDE SINKS BENEATH THE WAVES, THE AVENGERS QUINJET HOVERS PROTECTIVELY...MAKING CERTAIN THAT ALL LIFEBOATS ESCAPE THE PULL OF THE DYING VESSEL!
AND THEN...
VOOP VOO-VOO- VOOP
AHOY, ALL BOATS! PREPARE FOR PICK UP!
MY MEN AND I OWE YOU A GREAT DEAL, CAPTAIN.
ALL HANDS HAVE BEEN ACCOUNTED FOR...I DON'T KNOW ABOUT OUR PASSENGERS.
NONE BE MISSING, SAVE FOR MAGNETO AND THE CRIMSON DYNAMO?
NONE. BUT MAGNETO HAD LEFT THE SHIP LONG BEFORE.
THE DYNAMO HAD POWER ENOUGH TO SURVIVE THE EXPLOSION...OR TO CAUSE IT.

SUDDENLY...
COMRADES! THANK THE STARS, YOU ARE SAFE!
WHEN THE ENGINES EXPLODED ON ME, I FEARED YOU MIGHT--!
DARKSTAR, WHAT--?
WE HAVE QUESTIONS FOR YOU, DIMITRI BUKHARIN!
SHORTLY...
SO...YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE!
WE JOINED WITH YOU TO CAPTURE ONE WHO HAD SLAIN SOVIET SAILORS,* DYNAMO... NOT TO ENDANGER MORE SEAMEN!
MANY WOULD HAVE DIED HERE TODAY--
--HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE AVENGERS AND THE X-MEN! YES, THE X-MEN! WE MUST HAVE BEEN MAD TO LET YOU TURN US AGAINST OUR FELLOW MUTANTS!
*IN X-MEN #150.
HOW CAN YOU FEEL KINSHIP TO THOSE... OUTLAWS?
YOU LISTEN TO ME, DYNAMO! YOU WRECKED THAT VESSEL WITH NO REGARD TO THE INNOCENT LIVES ABOARD... IF NOT FOR US, YOU'D HAVE COMMITTED THE SAME CRIME MAGNETO PERPETRATED AGAINST YOUR PEOPLE!
CAPTAIN... PLEASE...
...ALLOW US TO TURN THE DYNAMO OVER TO MARITIME AUTHORITIES.
YES, WE MUST DO SOMETHING TO ATONE FOR OUR PART IN THIS SHAMEFUL ACT.
WE WILL LET YOU DEAL WITH MAGNETO YOUR WAY.

MILES AWAY...
QUITE A SIGHT THERE ON THE HORIZON, ISN'T IT?
YES,.. QUITE.
IS THAT A FREIGHTER THAT'S SINKING?
YES, SIR. STRANGE, THE WAY IT HAPPENED... SOMEHOW HER ENGINES BLEW UP.
I SEE.
WERE THERE MANY CASUALTIES?
THERE'S THE LUCK, SIR... NOT A ONE! EVIDENTLY THE FAMOUS AVENGERS WERE IN THE AREA... SAVED EVERYONE ON BOARD!
AH. THAT IS GOOD.
PARDON ME FOR STARING, SIR, BUT I DON'T RECALL SEEING YOU BEFORE ON THIS CRUISE.
I'VE KEPT TO MY CABIN.
WILL WE BE MAKING PORT SOON?
YES, SIR, WITHIN THE HOUR. BIT OF BUSINESS IN SINGAPORE?
YES. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.
NEXT
DAY OF JUDGMENT

MARVEL
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TM
4
JULY
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE
AUTHORITY
#4 IN A FOUR-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES
THE X-MEN VS. THE AVENGERS
THE JUDGMENT OF MAGNETO
pollard & RUBINSTEIN

STAN LEE PRESENTS:
"DAY OF JUDGMENT!"
GOOD EVENING. THIS IS YOUR REPORTER PHILIP CHAN, AND HERE IS THE NEWS...
WANTED FOR NUMEROUS CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, MAGNETO--THE INFAMOUS MUTANT CRIMINAL--IS CURRENTLY BELIEVED TO BE SOMEWHERE ON THE ISLAND OF SINGAPORE!
AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM OF TOP LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, WHICH INCLUDES THE AMERICAN-BASED GROUP OF ADVENTURERS KNOWN AS THE AVENGERS, HAS GATHERED HERE IN AN ATTEMPT TO BRING HIM TO JUSTICE!
CHANNEL 11 News at five
LIVE FROM SINGAPORE
MAGNETO

TOM DeFALCO
WRITER
CO-PLOTTER

KEITH POLLARD
PENCIL BREAKDOWNS

JOSEF RUBINSTEIN
FINISHED ART

JOE ROSEN
LETTERER

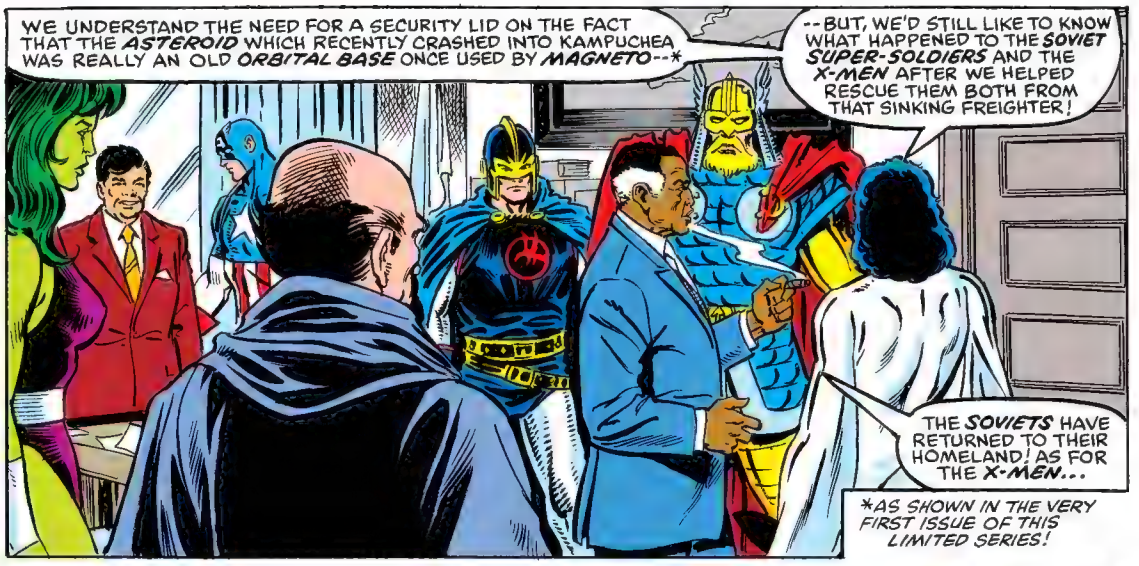
MAX SCHEELE
COLORIST

MARK GRUENWALD & ANN NOCENTI
EDITORS

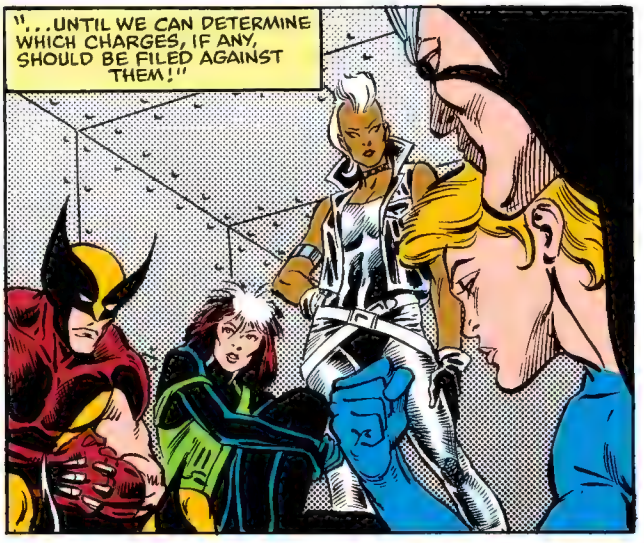
JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR IN CHIEF
CO-PLOTTER

ADDITIONAL INKING BY BOB McLEOD, AL WILLIAMSON, AND ALLEN MILGROM

OFFICIAL SOURCES IN THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC DEFENSE HAVE CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT MAGNETO IS BEING HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RECENT DESTRUCTION OF A DUTCH FREIGHTER IN THE CHINA SEA! *
*SEE LAST ISSUE!
NO LIVES WERE LOST, HOWEVER, THANKS TO THE TIMELY ARRIVAL OF THE AVENGERS!
I REALLY MUST SALUTE YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS STAFF, MINISTER...
...FOR THE WAY THEY'VE MANAGED TO PLASTER MAGNETO'S FACE ALL OVER THE NEWS WITHOUT LEAKING ANY CLASSIFIED INFORMATION!
MR. RONALDS, IT IS OUR DISTINCT PLEASURE TO AID YOU IN YOUR EFFORTS TO CAPTURE THIS MUTANT--
W-WHAT THE--?!
S-SORRY, SIR! WE COULDN'T KEEP THEM OUT!
AT EASE, SOLDIER! WE JUST WANT TO TALK TO YOUR BOSS!
HOW DARE YOU BARGE IN HERE?
MR. RONALDS, WE HEAR THAT YOU'VE BEEN PLACED IN CHARGE OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNIT THAT'S BEEN GIVEN JURISDICTION OVER MAGNETO... AND WE'D LIKE SOME INFORMATION!


WE UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR A SECURITY LID ON THE FACT THAT THE ASTEROID WHICH RECENTLY CRASHED INTO KAMPUCHEA WAS REALLY AN OLD ORBITAL BASE ONCE USED BY MAGNETO--*
--BUT, WE'D STILL LIKE TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SOVIET SUPER-SOLDIERS AND THE X-MEN AFTER WE HELPED RESCUE THEM BOTH FROM THAT SINKING FREIGHTER!
THE SOVIETS HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMELAND! AS FOR THE X-MEN...
*AS SHOWN IN THE VERY FIRST ISSUE OF THIS LIMITED SERIES!

"...THEY'RE MUTANTS--FRIENDS OF MAGNETO--AND THEY'RE CURRENTLY BEING HELD IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY...


"...UNTIL WE CAN DETERMINE WHICH CHARGES, IF ANY, SHOULD BE FILED AGAINST THEM!"

FOOL! YOU CAN ONLY HOLD THE X-MEN FOR AS LONG AS THEY CONSENT TO BE HELD!
BRRING

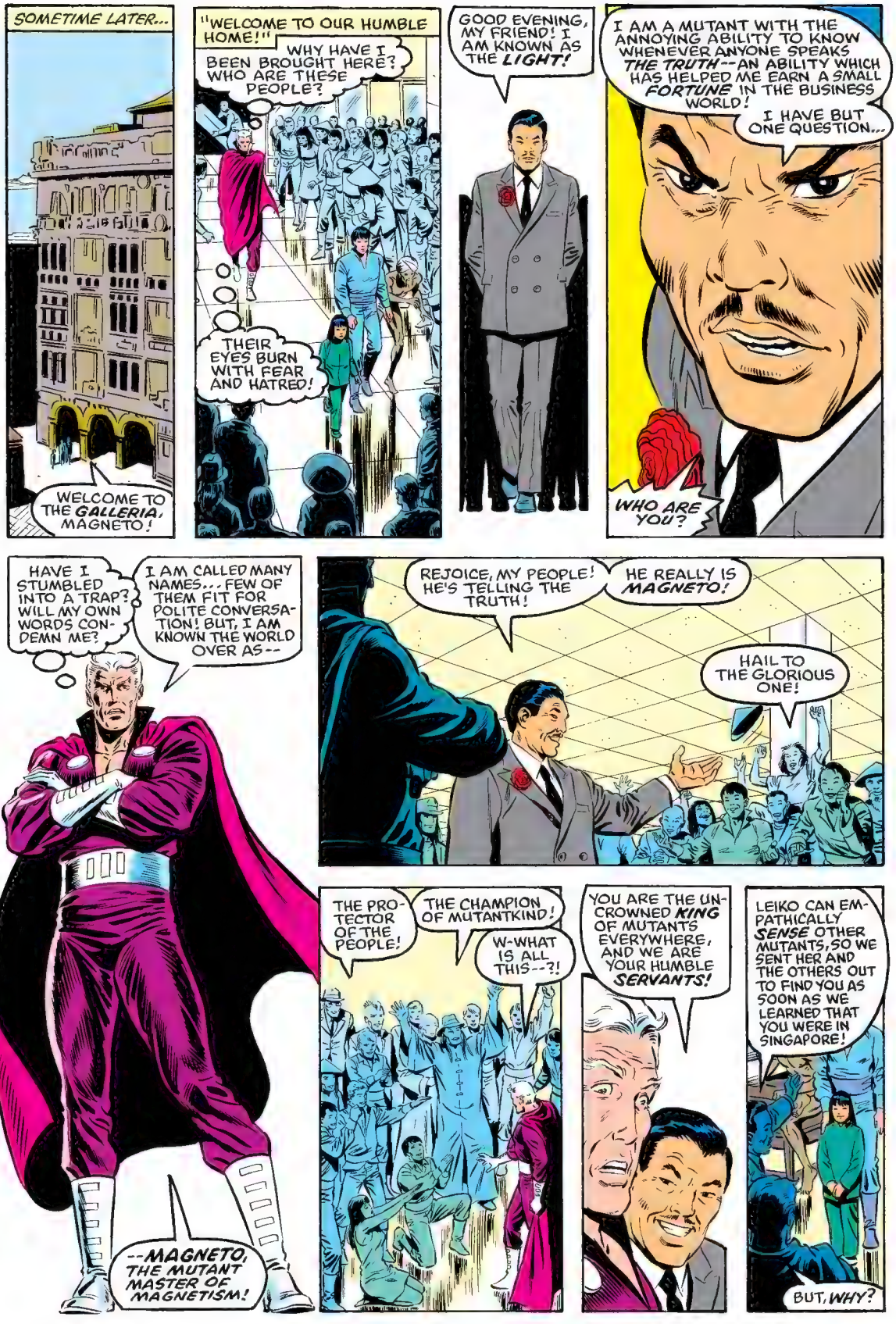
YES--? AT LAST! MAGNETO'S BEEN SPOTTED!
WHERE IS HE?
THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS, HERO!

YOU COSTUMED CLOWNS HAVE ALREADY BLOWN YOUR CHANCE AT HIM!

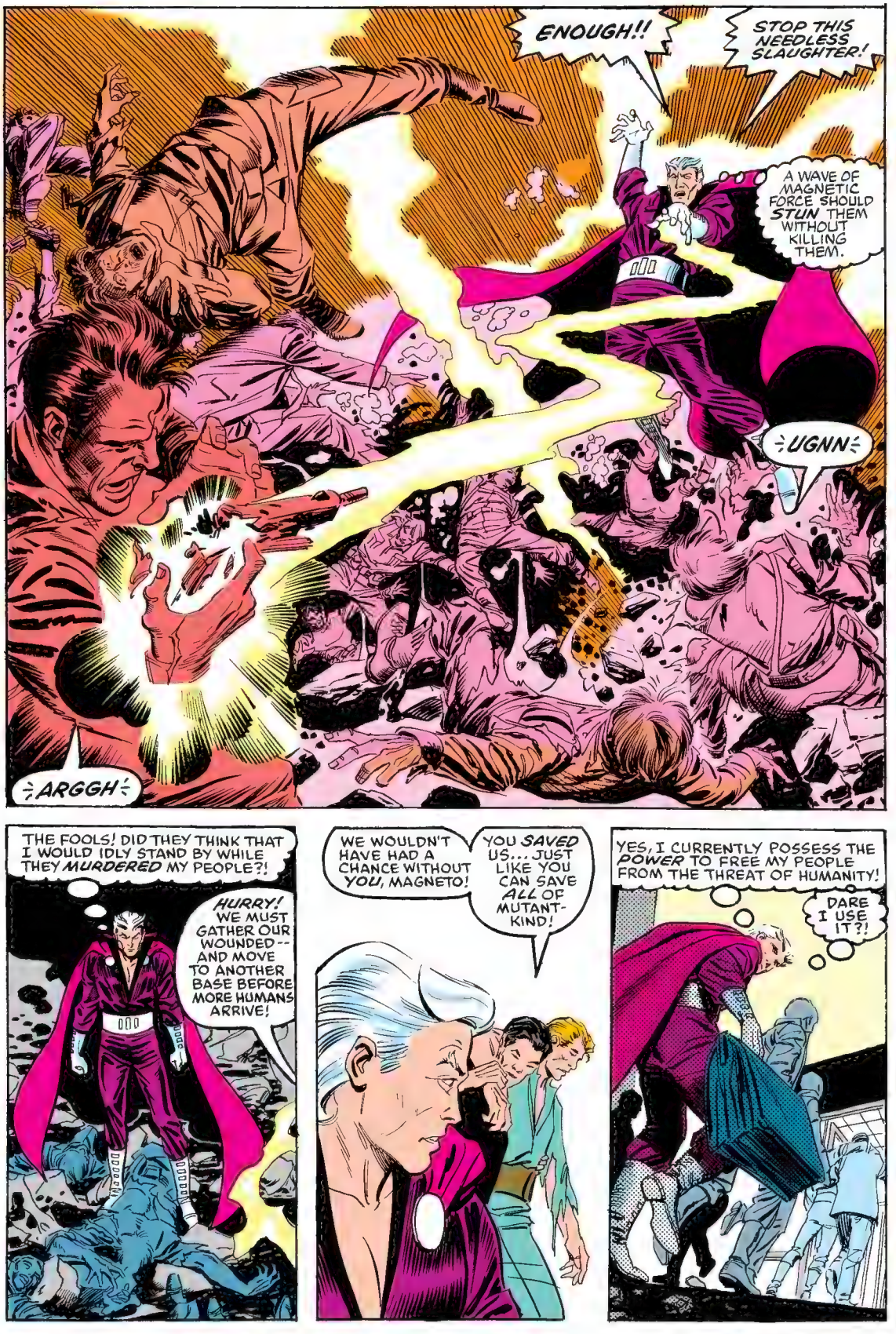
"MY PEOPLE ARE PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF NEUTRALIZING HIM WITHOUT YOUR HELP!"
WHAT AM I TO DO?
I AM ALONE... HUNTED... IN A FOREIGN LAND... WITH NEITHER FRIENDS, NOR FUNDS.
AND, YET, I COULD RECTIFY THAT ALL WITHIN AN INSTANT...
...IF I ONLY DARED EMPLOY THE CIRCUITRY WHICH I SECRETLY RESCUED FROM MY FALLEN SATELLITE!
THAT'S HIM!
LET'S WAIT UNTIL HE MOVES AWAY FROM THE CROWD!
BUT, THEN, FATE TAKES AN UNEXPECTED HAND AS...
WATCH IT, BUDDY!
WHY DON'T YA LOOK WHERE YA--
HEY! I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE THAT FREAK WHO WAS ON THE NEWS!
THE MUTIE!!
THAT STUPID TOURIST HAS RUINED EVERYTHING!
TAKE HIM! NOW!!
ASSASSINS SPRINGING AROUND ME!
GET HIM! SOMEBODY STOP THAT LOUSY MUTIE BEFORE HE KILLS US ALL!

STOP HIM! PUT HIM DOWN!
THE FOOLS! WOULD THEY CONTINUE TO RUSH FORWARD SO EAGERLY IF THEY TRULY KNEW HOW EASILY I COULD DESTROY THEM ALL?!
NO! I MUST NOT!
I WILL NOT!!
INSTEAD, I'LL MERELY HOLD THEM SAFELY AT BAY WITH A SIMPLE MAGNETIC FIELD-- WHILE I CONTINUE TO GATHER ALL OF THEIR BULLETS TOGETHER!
THERE! THAT SHOULD DISTRACT THEM LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO MAKE GOOD AN ESCAPE!
BUT, WHERE CAN I GO? WHERE CAN I FIND SAFETY?
MAGNETO, THIS WAY--! HURRY!!

YOU HAVE DONE WELL, LEIKO! YOU LED US RIGHT TO HIM!
HE WAS EASY TO FIND, CRAWLER! HIS AURA IS SO POWERFUL!
COME ON, MAGNETO! THERE'S NO TIME TO DELAY!
WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?
WE ARE MUTANTS... LIKE YOURSELF... AND WE'VE BEEN SENT TO HELP YOU!
GO WITH LEIKO AND CRAWLER! NOW!! THEY'LL LEAD YOU TO SAFETY!
I'LL DISTRACT YOUR PURSUERS!
THE GROUND--!! IT'S SUDDENLY BECOME AS SLIPPERY AS GLASS!
C-CAN'T STAND!
HURRY! SLIDER'S CONTROL OVER FRICTION WON'T STOP THOSE HUMANS FOR LONG!
DO I DARE TRUST THESE PEOPLE?
AND, IF SO, DO I HAVE THE RIGHT TO ENDANGER THEIR LIVES BY ALLOWING THEM TO AID ME?
MAGNETO, ARE YOU COMING?
YES!

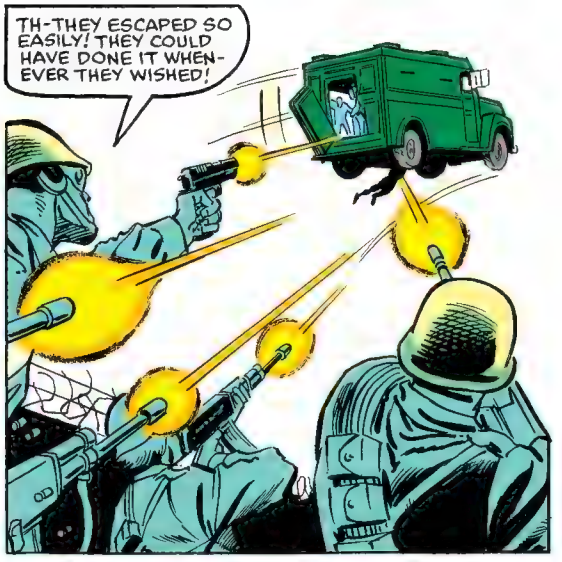

SOMETIME LATER...
WELCOME TO THE GALLERIA, MAGNETO!
"WELCOME TO OUR HUMBLE HOME!"
WHY HAVE I BEEN BROUGHT HERE? WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?
THEIR EYES BURN WITH FEAR AND HATRED!
GOOD EVENING, MY FRIEND! I AM KNOWN AS THE LIGHT!
I AM A MUTANT WITH THE ANNOYING ABILITY TO KNOW WHENEVER ANYONE SPEAKS THE TRUTH--AN ABILITY WHICH HAS HELPED ME EARN A SMALL FORTUNE IN THE BUSINESS WORLD!
I HAVE BUT ONE QUESTION...
WHO ARE YOU?
HAVE I STUMBLED INTO A TRAP? WILL MY OWN WORDS CONDEMN ME?
I AM CALLED MANY NAMES... FEW OF THEM FIT FOR POLITE CONVERSATION! BUT, I AM KNOWN THE WORLD OVER AS--
--MAGNETO, THE MUTANT MASTER OF MAGNETISM!
REJOICE, MY PEOPLE! HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH!
HE REALLY IS MAGNETO!
HAIL TO THE GLORIOUS ONE!
THE PROTECTOR OF THE PEOPLE!
THE CHAMPION OF MUTANTKIND!
W-WHAT IS ALL THIS--?!
YOU ARE THE UNCROWNED KING OF MUTANTS EVERYWHERE, AND WE ARE YOUR HUMBLE SERVANTS!
LEIKO CAN EMPATHICALLY SENSE OTHER MUTANTS, SO WE SENT HER AND THE OTHERS OUT TO FIND YOU AS SOON AS WE LEARNED THAT YOU WERE IN SINGAPORE!
BUT, WHY?

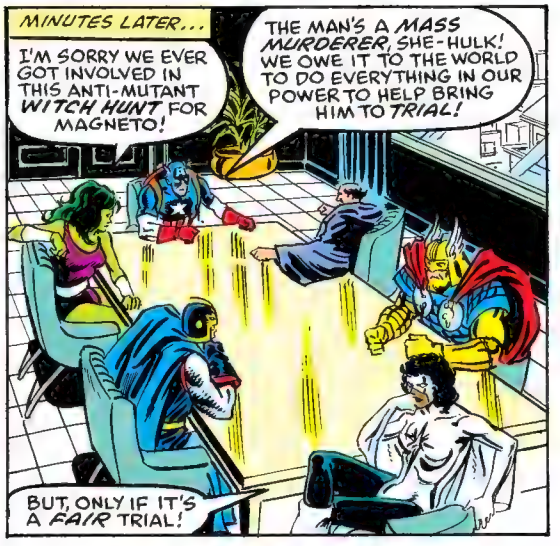
TO AID YOU IN YOUR WAR AGAINST HUMANITY!
MANKIND HAS OPPRESSED OUR PEOPLE LONG ENOUGH! IT'S TIME WE STRUCK BACK!
THE LIGHT SOUNDS SO MUCH LIKE I DID... BEFORE I TURNED AWAY FROM MY DREAMS OF CONQUEST!
I NO LONGER BELIEVE THAT WAR IS THE ANSWER, MY FRIEND! HUMANS AND MUTANTS MUST LEARN TO LIVE TOGETHER PEACEFULLY!
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, MAGNETO! THAT'S LIKE TRYING TO TEACH A GORILLA HOW TO FLY!
IT ONLY WASTES YOUR TIME AND, ANNOYS THE--
--GORILLA?!
BWOOM!
AT LAST! WE'VE FINALLY FOUND MAGNETO!
LOOK! HE'S HOLED UP WITH A WHOLE HORDE OF MUTIES!
HIT 'EM HARD!
DON'T GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO USE THEIR WEIRD POWERS AGAINST US!
÷URKKK÷
BDAM!


ENOUGH!!
STOP THIS NEEDLESS SLAUGHTER!
A WAVE OF MAGNETIC FORCE SHOULD STUN THEM WITHOUT KILLING THEM.
÷UGNN÷
÷ARGGH÷
THE FOOLS! DID THEY THINK THAT I WOULD IDLY STAND BY WHILE THEY MURDERED MY PEOPLE?!
HURRY! WE MUST GATHER OUR WOUNDED-- AND MOVE TO ANOTHER BASE BEFORE MORE HUMANS ARRIVE!
WE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD A CHANCE WITHOUT YOU, MAGNETO!
YOU SAVED US... JUST LIKE YOU CAN SAVE ALL OF MUTANT-KIND!
YES, I CURRENTLY POSSESS THE POWER TO FREE MY PEOPLE FROM THE THREAT OF HUMANITY!
DARE I USE IT?!

MEANWHILE...
I'M GETTING REAL TIRED OF STARING AT THESE--
--IRON WALLS!
AS ARE WE ALL, ROGUE!
WHAT'S THE DRILL, STORM?
WE HAVE BIDED OUR TIME, WAITING FOR THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO FORMALLY ARREST US, OR SET US FREE!
SO FAR, THEY HAVE BEEN CONTENT TO LET US ROT!
WE HAVE BEEN PATIENT LONG ENOUGH, WOLVERINE!
RIGHT!
SNIKT.
SKRITT
HI, CHUCKLES!
IT'S TIME TO PAR-TAY!
PWANGG!
NOT BAD! DAZZLER'S LIGHT BLAST MANAGED TO FOCUS ALL THE ATTENTION TOPSIDE, WHILE I TAKE THE REAR EXIT!

TAA-TAA, FELLAS! IT'S BEEN REAL!


TH-THEY ESCAPED SO EASILY! THEY COULD HAVE DONE IT WHENEVER THEY WISHED!

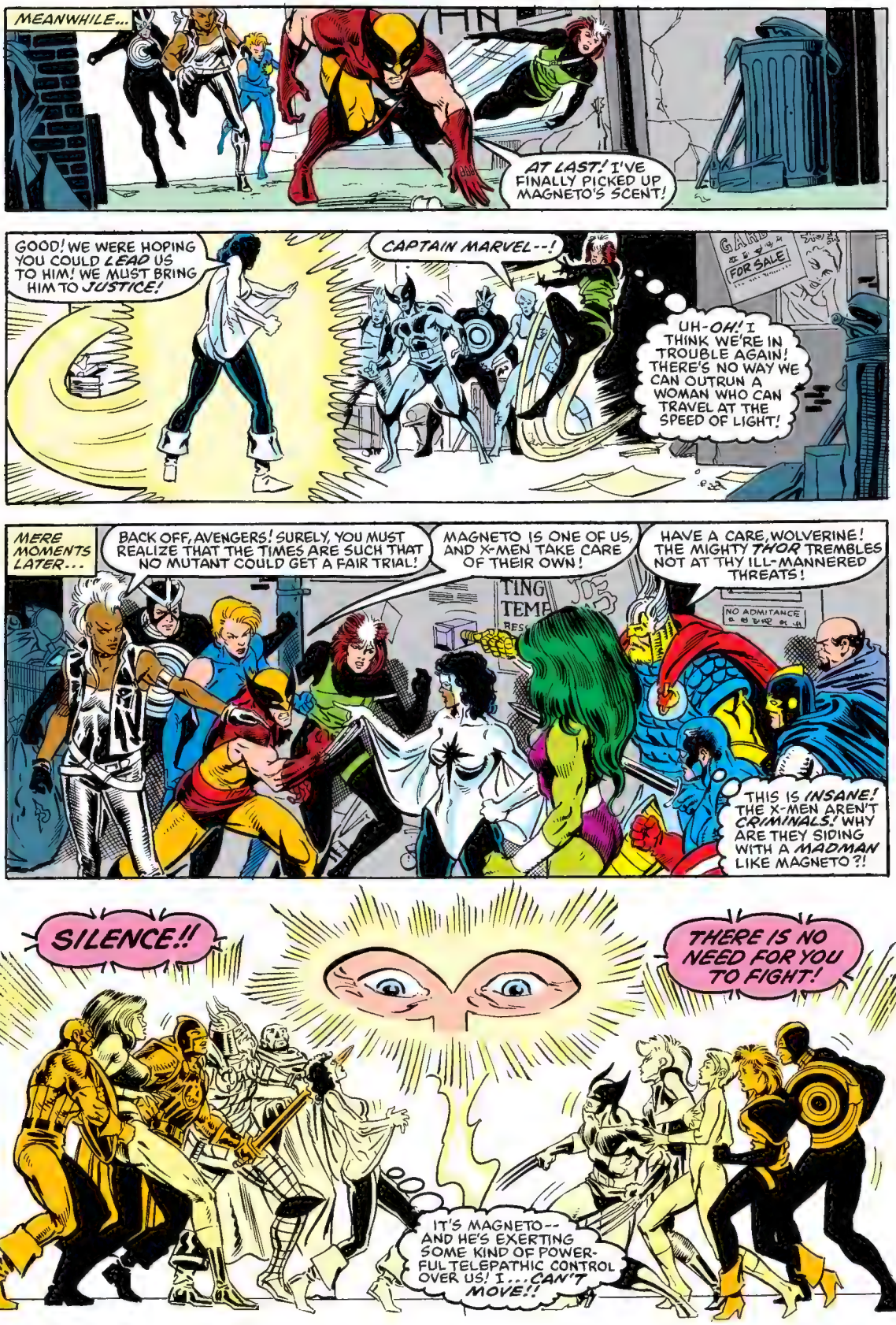

MINUTES LATER...
I'M SORRY WE EVER GOT INVOLVED IN THIS ANTI-MUTANT WITCH HUNT FOR MAGNETO!
THE MAN'S A MASS MURDERER, SHE-HULK! WE OWE IT TO THE WORLD TO DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO HELP BRING HIM TO TRIAL!
BUT, ONLY IF IT'S A FAIR TRIAL!

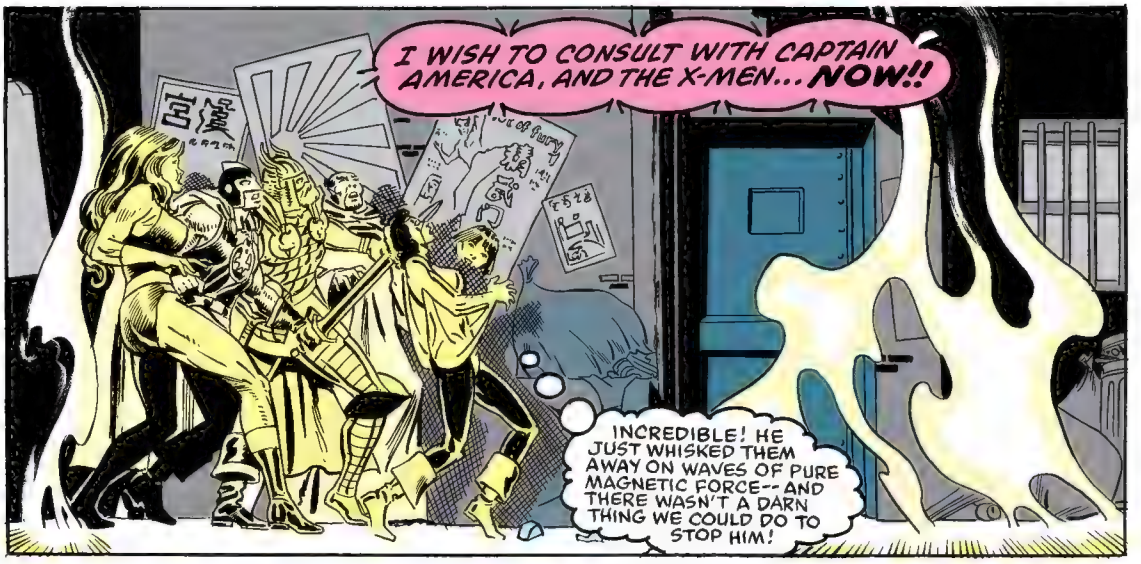
SUDDENLY...
THE X-MEN HAVE ESCAPED! PROBABLY TO RENDEZVOUS WITH MAGNETO!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? GET AFTER THEM!

SLOW DOWN, MR. RONALDS! YOU HAVE NO AUTHORITY OVER US! WE MAY BE SANCTIONED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, BUT WE DON'T WORK FOR IT!
I CAN'T BELIEVE MY EARS!
YOUR COUNTRY--AND THE WORLD--IS COUNTING ON YOU!

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D LIVE TO SEE THE DAY WHEN THE AVENGERS WOULD FAIL TO DO THEIR DUTY!

ELSEWHERE, AT THAT VERY MOMENT...
THE LIGHT ORIGINALLY BOUGHT THIS SHIP FROM THE GOVERNMENT WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT HE WOULD EVENTUALLY TRANSFORM IT INTO A FLOATING MUSEUM AND SHOPPING MALL...
...LUCKY FOR US, THEY DON'T REALIZE THAT HE'S BEEN USING IT AS A SECRET HOME FOR US MUTANTS!
YES, LUCKY...
YOU SEEM AWFULLY PREOCCUPIED, MAGNETO!
WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU DOING WITH THAT HELMET?
I AM CONSTRUCTING A WEAPON, LEIKO!
PERHAPS, THE ULTIMATE WEAPON!
PITY THE WORLD, LITTLE ONE...
FROM THIS MOMENT ON, IT WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN!


MEANWHILE...
AT LAST! I'VE FINALLY PICKED UP MAGNETO'S SCENT!
GOOD! WE WERE HOPING YOU COULD LEAD US TO HIM! WE MUST BRING HIM TO JUSTICE!
CAPTAIN MARVEL--!
FOR SALE
UH-OH! I THINK WE'RE IN TROUBLE AGAIN! THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN OUTRUN A WOMAN WHO CAN TRAVEL AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT!
MERE MOMENTS LATER...
BACK OFF, AVENGERS! SURELY, YOU MUST REALIZE THAT THE TIMES ARE SUCH THAT NO MUTANT COULD GET A FAIR TRIAL!
MAGNETO IS ONE OF US, AND X-MEN TAKE CARE OF THEIR OWN!
HAVE A CARE, WOLVERINE! THE MIGHTY THOR TREMBLES NOT AT THY ILL-MANNERED THREATS!
NO ADMITTANCE
THIS IS INSANE! THE X-MEN AREN'T CRIMINALS! WHY ARE THEY SIDING WITH A MADMAN LIKE MAGNETO?!
SILENCE!!
THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO FIGHT!
IT'S MAGNETO-- AND HE'S EXERTING SOME KIND OF POWERFUL TELEPATHIC CONTROL OVER US! I...CAN'T MOVE!!


I WISH TO CONSULT WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND THE X-MEN... NOW!!
INCREDIBLE! HE JUST WHISKED THEM AWAY ON WAVES OF PURE MAGNETIC FORCE-- AND THERE WASN'T A DARN THING WE COULD DO TO STOP HIM!

YOU NEVER HAD MENTAL POWERS LIKE THIS BEFORE!
YOU MUST HAVE FOUND SOMETHING ON THAT ASTEROID BASE OF YOURS WHICH CRASHED INTO KAMPUCHEA!*

YOU ARE QUITE PERCEPTIVE, CAPTAIN!
I DID RECOVER CERTAIN CIRCUITRY... CIRCUITRY WHICH, WHEN COMBINED WITH MY OWN MAGNETIC POWERS, ALLOWS ME TO COMPLETELY DOMINATE ANY AND EVERY LIVING MIND I CHOOSE!

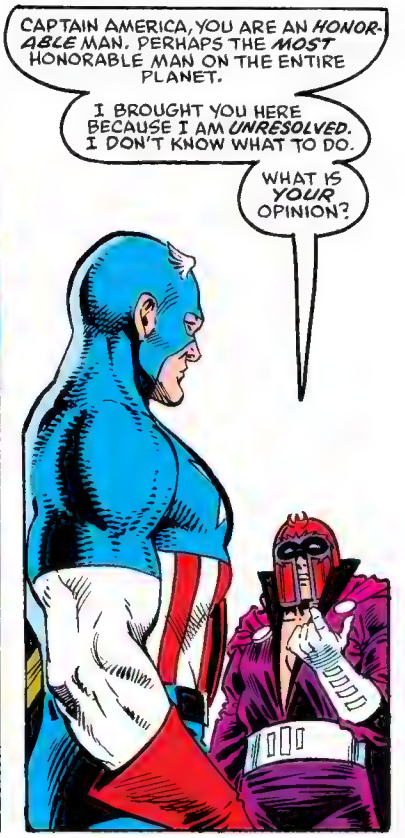
I NEVER USED THIS CIRCUITRY BEFORE BECAUSE PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER, THE FORMER LEADER OF THE X-MEN, WAS A TELEPATH POWERFUL ENOUGH TO BLOCK ITS EFFECTS!

BUT, ALAS, PROFESSOR XAVIER IS NO LONGER ON THIS PLANET!*
THIS IS FANTASTIC! YOU CAN USE THIS NEW POWER TO COMPLETELY ENSLAVE MANKIND!
NO!

*SEE X-MEN #200 FOR THE FULL STORY!

I MIGHT HAVE USED IT THAT WAY ONCE... BUT I HAVE RECENTLY MODIFIED IT SO THAT I CAN USE IT TO REMOVE ALL TRACES OF PREJUDICE-- PARTICULARLY THAT OF MUTANTS-- FROM THE COLLECTIVE MIND OF THE HUMAN RACE!
CHILDREN SUCH AS LEIKO COULD GROW UP IN A WORLD FREE OF BLIND, UNREASONING HATRED!

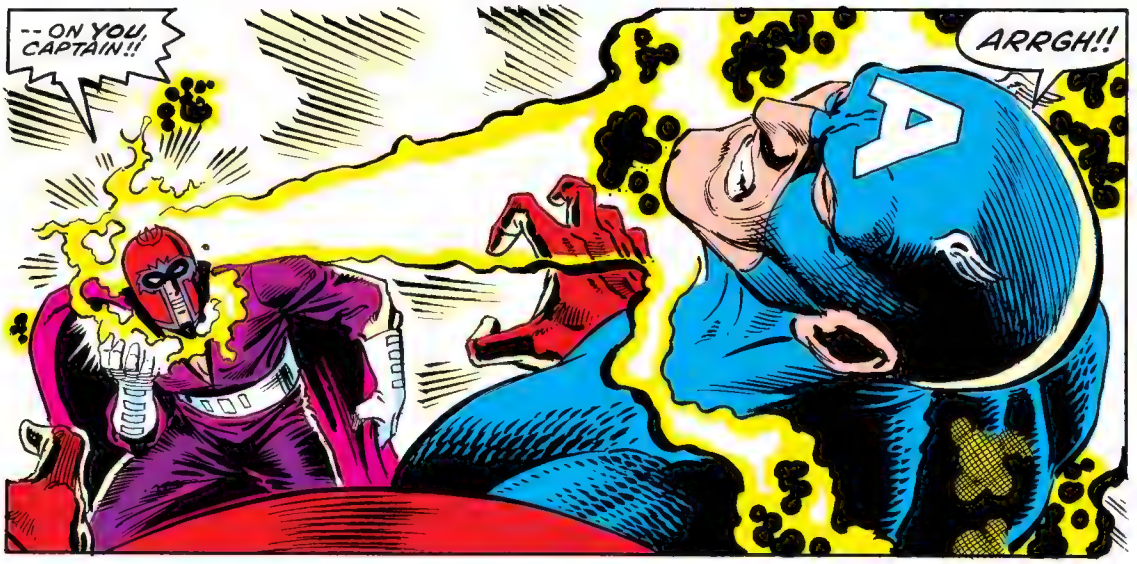
HEY! THAT SOUNDS GREAT!
DOES IT? IS IT RIGHT TO TAMPER WITH A MAN'S MIND... EVEN FOR SUCH A NOBLE CAUSE?
NO WAY!
THINK OF THE LIVES YOU'D SAVE!
THE WARS THAT WOULD BE PREVENTED!


CAPTAIN AMERICA, YOU ARE AN HONORABLE MAN, PERHAPS THE MOST HONORABLE MAN ON THE ENTIRE PLANET.
I BROUGHT YOU HERE BECAUSE I AM UNRESOLVED. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?

I'M AFRAID THAT I CAN'T MAKE THINGS ANY EASIER FOR YOU, MAGNETO! YOU SEE, I BELIEVE IN THE SANCTITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL!
A MAN SHOULD BE FREE TO MAKE UP HIS OWN MIND... HAVE HIS OWN THOUGHTS... EVEN IF THAT MAN IS A BIGOT!

DESTROY THE HELMET BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! NO MAN WAS MEANT TO WIELD SUCH ABSOLUTE POWER!
NO! YOU MUST USE IT... FOR THE GOOD OF YOUR PEOPLE!
LISTEN TO CAP! HE'S RIGHT!

ENOUGH! I HAVE MADE MY DECISION!
I WILL USE THE HELMET--


-- ON YOU, CAPTAIN!!
ARRGH!!

SPEAK, CAPTAIN!
TELL ME YOUR OPINION NOW THAT I HAVE TOTALLY ERADICATED ANY ANTI-MUTANT FEELINGS YOU MIGHT HAVE HAD!

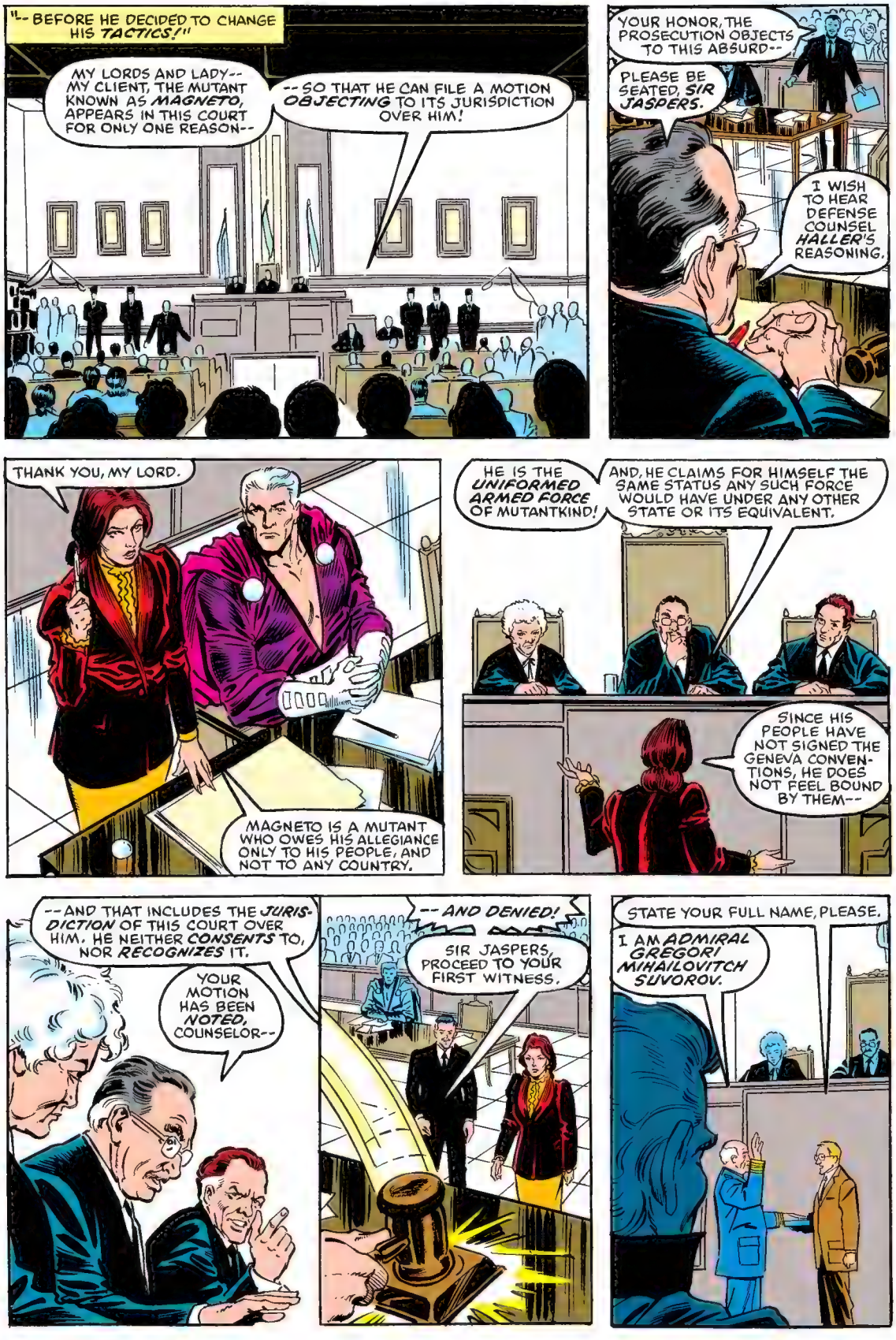
I-IT... HASN'T CHANGED!
I... I STILL BELIEVE EVERYTHING I SAID... FOR THE SAME REASONS!

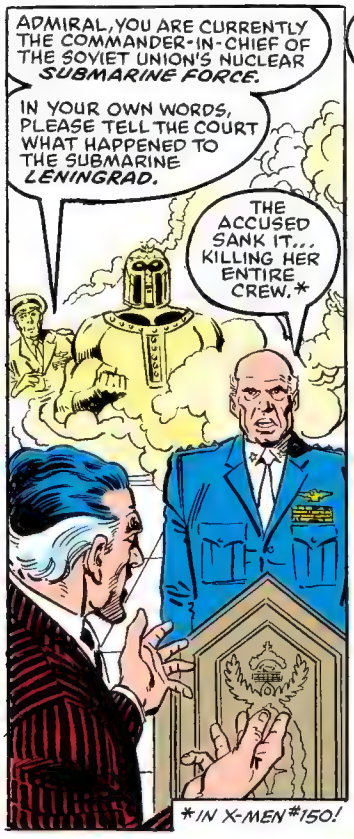
NO! IT ISN'T POSSIBLE! I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT ALL HUMANS SECRETLY HATED MUTANTS!
BUT, YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY ANTI-MUTANT FEELINGS!
YOU NEVER DID!!

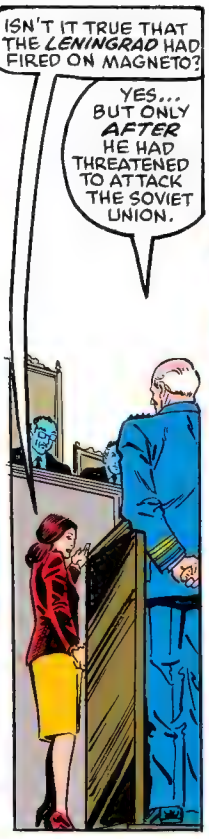
YOU HAVE SHAMED ME, CAPTAIN!
I NOW REALIZE THAT MAN AND MUTANT MUST BEGIN TRUSTING EACH OTHER IF WE ARE EVER TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE!

PERHAPS, I CAN BEGIN THAT TRUST NOW...
...BY SURRENDERING MYSELF TO YOU!

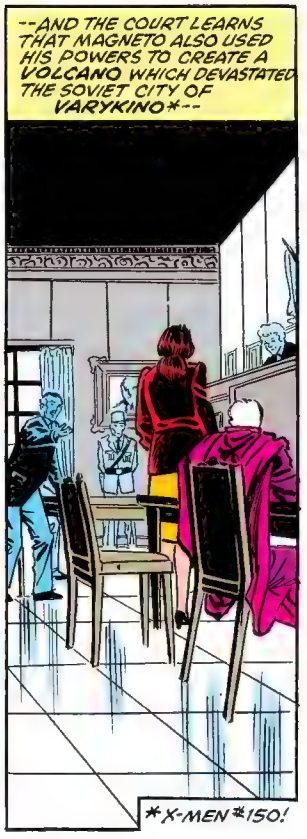
THIS IS TED KOPPEL REPORTING FROM THE PALAIS DE JUSTICE IN PARIS, WHERE A SPECIAL TRIBUNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE HAS BEEN HASTILY CONVENED TO DECIDE THE FATE OF --
--MAGNETO, THE SELF-STYLED MUTANT MASTER OF MAGNETISM!
"SITTING IN JUDGMENT OF THIS MAN, WHOM MANY BELIEVE IS THE GREATEST ENEMY OF HUMANITY SINCE ADOLF HITLER HIMSELF, WILL BE THREE DISTINGUISHED JURISTS: ALEXANDRE GILBERT DU MOTIER OF FRANCE, LADY JANET GRACE SOUTHERLAND OF ENGLAND, AND GUSTAVE ROCH UDERZO OF SWITZERLAND."
DU MOTIER
SOUTHERLAND
UDERZO
"EARLIER TODAY, A TENSE BUT PEACEFUL CROWD OF ONLOOKERS WATCHED AS THE AVENGERS ARRIVED, ESCORTING A BAND OF UNIDENTIFIED COSTUMED MUTANTS--
"--WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN SEEN WORKING WITH MAGNETO."
I DON'T GET IT, PSYLOCKE!
WHY ARE WE IN THE UNITED STATES WHILE THE OTHER X-MEN ARE IN PARIS?
STORM DIDN'T KNOW WHAT STRINGS THE AVENGERS PULLED TO ALLOW THE OTHERS TO ATTEND THE TRIAL, LONG-SHOT, BUT SHE WANTED US TO BE HELD IN RESERVE IN CASE OF TROUBLE.
I'M STILL NEW TO ALL THIS STUFF, AND I REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON.
I THOUGHT THE X-MEN WERE FORMED TO PROTECT THEIR OWN KIND, AND TO DEFEND HUMANITY FROM EVIL MUTANTS.
MAGNETO USED TO BE ONE OF THE BAD GUYS. HE USED TO BELIEVE THAT THE ENDS JUSTIFIED THE MEANS--
--AND THAT THE ONLY WAY HE COULD GUARANTEE THE SAFETY OF MUTANTKIND WAS BY CONQUERING THE PLANET!
HE COMMITTED QUITE A FEW ATROCITIES--

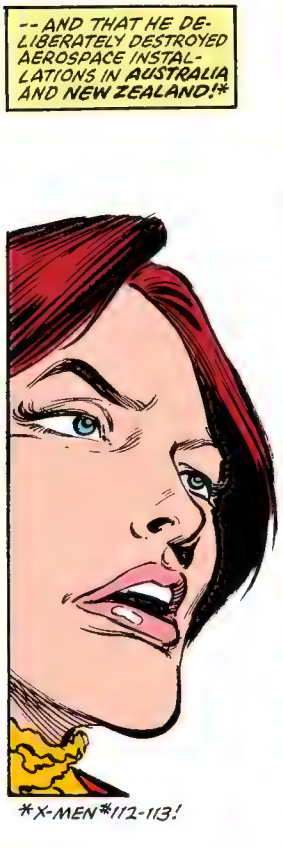

"-- BEFORE HE DECIDED TO CHANGE HIS TACTICS!"
MY LORDS AND LADY-- MY CLIENT, THE MUTANT KNOWN AS MAGNETO, APPEARS IN THIS COURT FOR ONLY ONE REASON--
-- SO THAT HE CAN FILE A MOTION OBJECTING TO ITS JURISDICTION OVER HIM!
YOUR HONOR, THE PROSECUTION OBJECTS TO THIS ABSURD--
PLEASE BE SEATED, SIR JASPERS.
I WISH TO HEAR DEFENSE COUNSEL HALLER'S REASONING.
THANK YOU, MY LORD.
MAGNETO IS A MUTANT WHO OWES HIS ALLEGIANCE ONLY TO HIS PEOPLE, AND NOT TO ANY COUNTRY.
HE IS THE UNIFORMED ARMED FORCE OF MUTANTKIND!
AND, HE CLAIMS FOR HIMSELF THE SAME STATUS ANY SUCH FORCE WOULD HAVE UNDER ANY OTHER STATE OR ITS EQUIVALENT.
SINCE HIS PEOPLE HAVE NOT SIGNED THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS, HE DOES NOT FEEL BOUND BY THEM--
--AND THAT INCLUDES THE JURISDICTION OF THIS COURT OVER HIM. HE NEITHER CONSENTS TO, NOR RECOGNIZES IT.
YOUR MOTION HAS BEEN NOTED, COUNSELOR--
-- AND DENIED!
SIR JASPERS, PROCEED TO YOUR FIRST WITNESS.
STATE YOUR FULL NAME, PLEASE.
I AM ADMIRAL GREGORI MIHAILOVITCH SUVOROV.

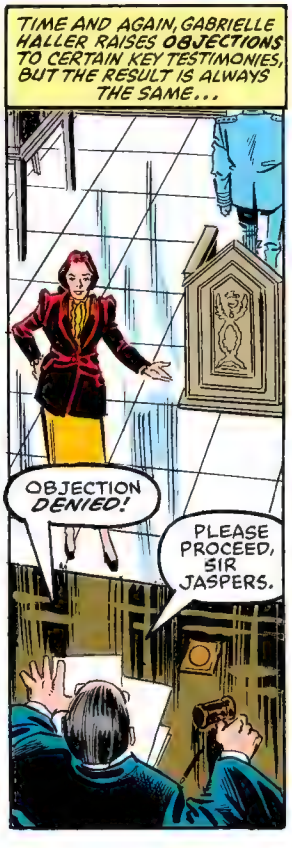

ADMIRAL, YOU ARE CURRENTLY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE SOVIET UNION'S NUCLEAR SUBMARINE FORCE.
IN YOUR OWN WORDS, PLEASE TELL THE COURT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SUBMARINE LENINGRAD.
THE ACCUSED SANK IT... KILLING HER ENTIRE CREW.*
*IN X-MEN #150!

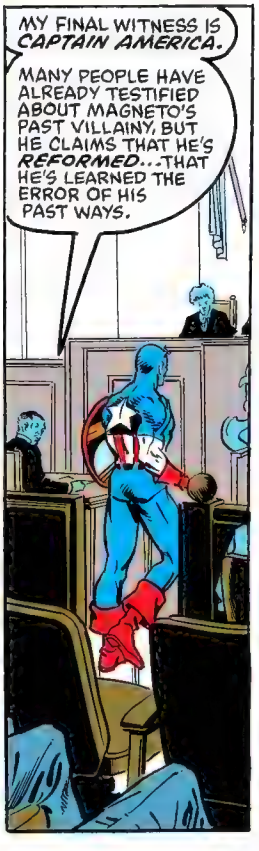

ISN'T IT TRUE THAT THE LENINGRAD HAD FIRED ON MAGNETO?
YES... BUT ONLY AFTER HE HAD THREATENED TO ATTACK THE SOVIET UNION.

THANK YOU, ADMIRAL.
LET THE RECORD SHOW THAT THE LENINGRAD WAS ACTING IN SELF-DEFENSE IN RESPONSE TO MAGNETO'S AGGRESSION!
MORE WITNESSES ARE CALLED--

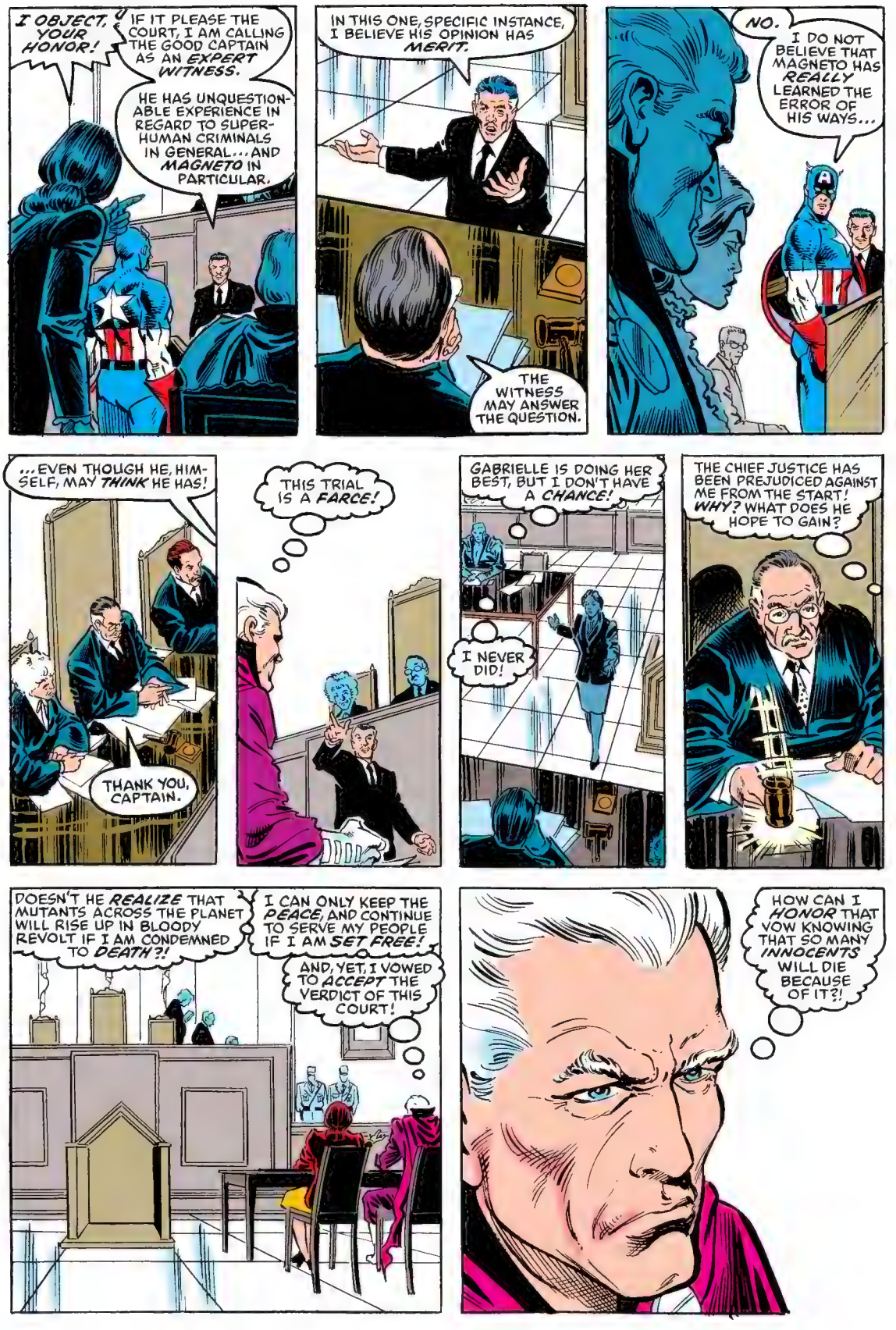

--AND THE COURT LEARNS THAT MAGNETO ALSO USED HIS POWERS TO CREATE A VOLCANO WHICH DEVASTATED THE SOVIET CITY OF VARYKINO*--
*X-MEN #150!

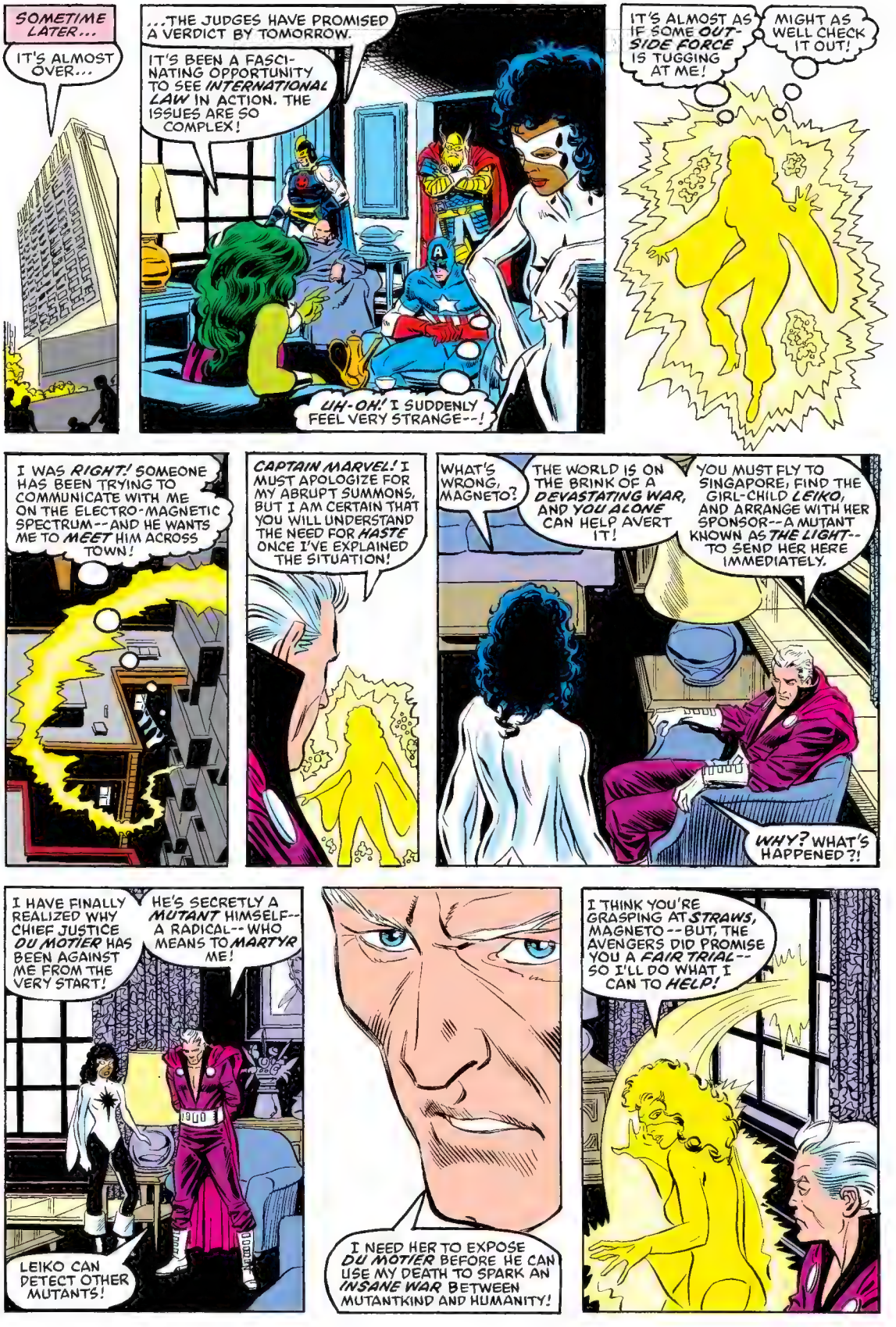

--AND THAT HE DELIBERATELY DESTROYED AEROSPACE INSTALLATIONS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND!*
*X-MEN #112-113!

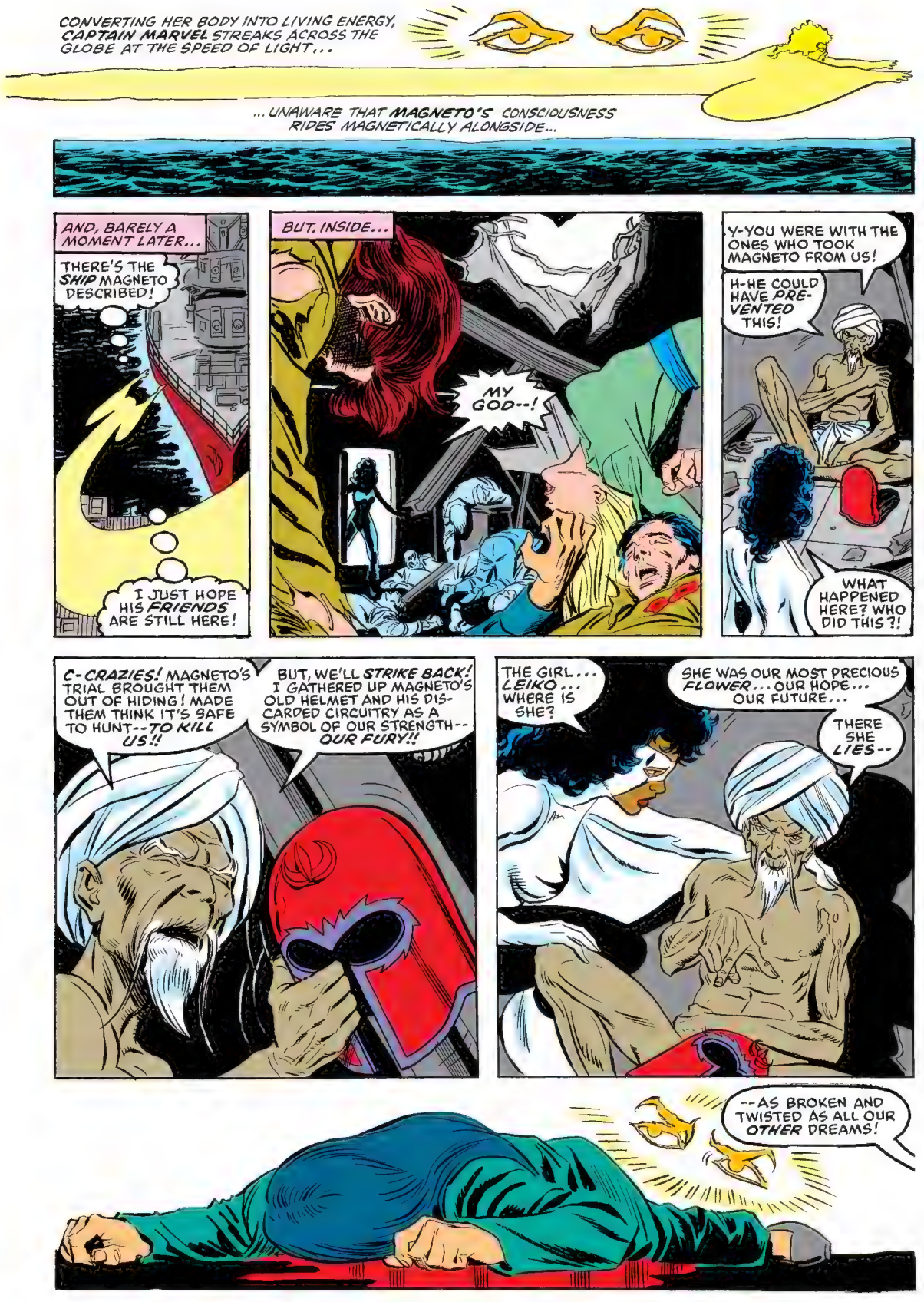

TIME AND AGAIN, GABRIELLE HALLER RAISES OBJECTIONS TO CERTAIN KEY TESTIMONIES, BUT THE RESULT IS ALWAYS THE SAME...
OBJECTION DENIED!
PLEASE PROCEED, SIR JASPERS.


MY FINAL WITNESS IS CAPTAIN AMERICA.
MANY PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY TESTIFIED ABOUT MAGNETO'S PAST VILLAINY, BUT HE CLAIMS THAT HE'S REFORMED...THAT HE'S LEARNED THE ERROR OF HIS PAST WAYS.

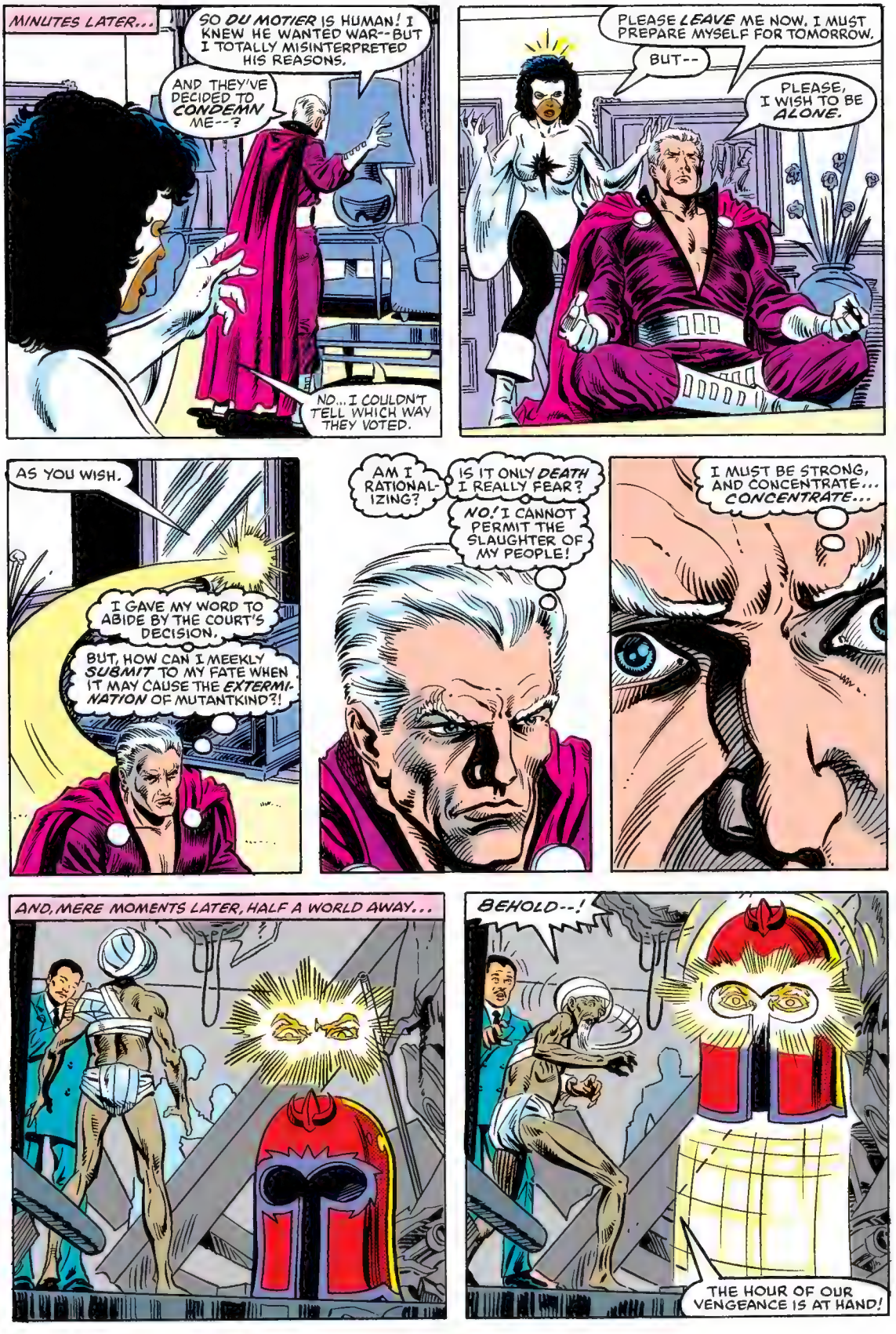
IN YOUR OPINION, CAPTAIN...IS HE TELLING THE TRUTH?!

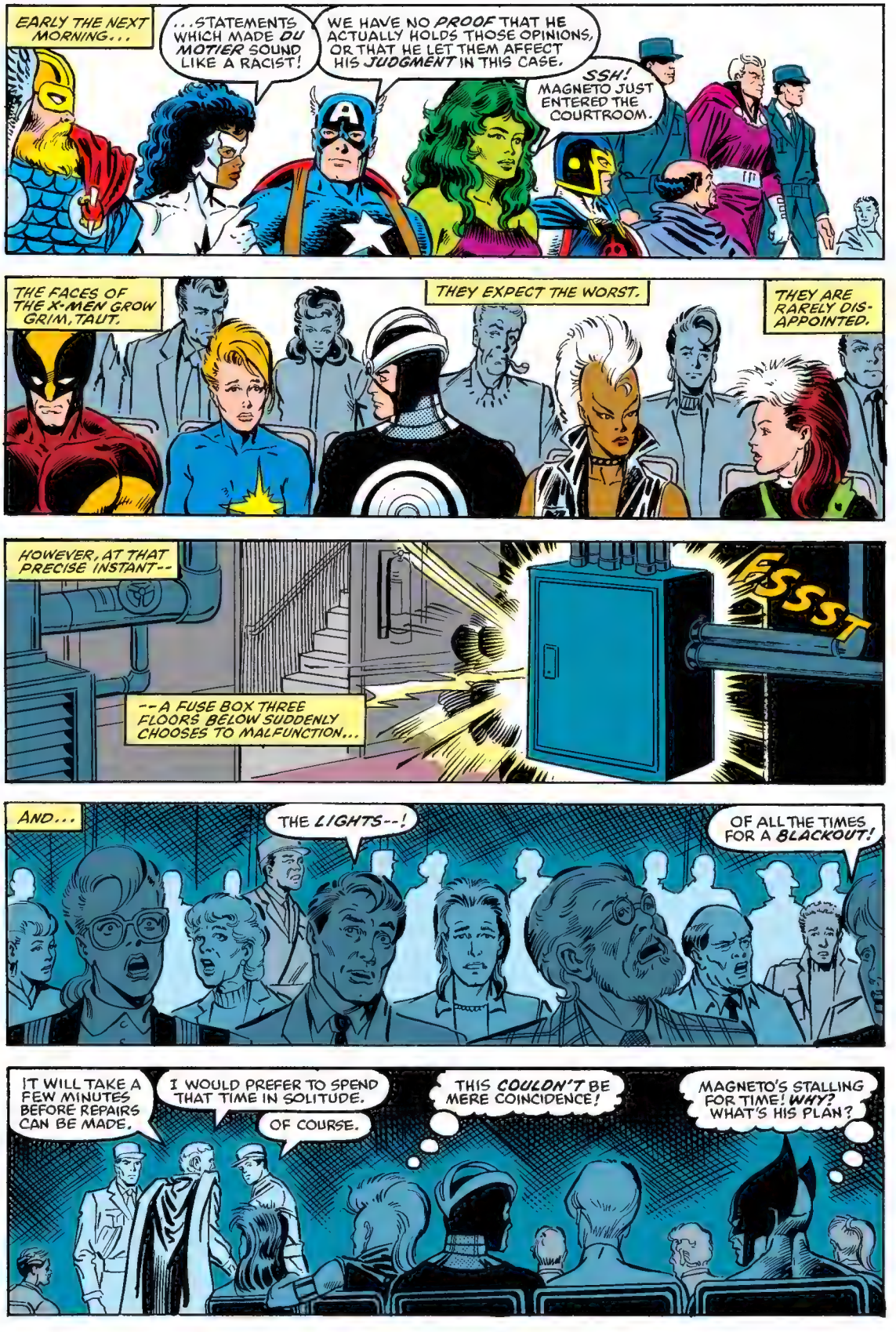

I OBJECT, YOUR HONOR!
IF IT PLEASE THE COURT, I AM CALLING THE GOOD CAPTAIN AS AN EXPERT WITNESS.
HE HAS UNQUESTIONABLE EXPERIENCE IN REGARD TO SUPER-HUMAN CRIMINALS IN GENERAL... AND MAGNETO IN PARTICULAR.
IN THIS ONE, SPECIFIC INSTANCE, I BELIEVE HIS OPINION HAS MERIT.
THE WITNESS MAY ANSWER THE QUESTION.
NO.
I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT MAGNETO HAS REALLY LEARNED THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS...
...EVEN THOUGH HE, HIMSELF, MAY THINK HE HAS!
THANK YOU, CAPTAIN.
THIS TRIAL IS A FARCE!
GABRIELLE IS DOING HER BEST, BUT I DON'T HAVE A CHANCE!
I NEVER DID!
THE CHIEF JUSTICE HAS BEEN PREJUDICED AGAINST ME FROM THE START! WHY? WHAT DOES HE HOPE TO GAIN?
DOESN'T HE REALIZE THAT MUTANTS ACROSS THE PLANET WILL RISE UP IN BLOODY REVOLT IF I AM CONDEMNED TO DEATH?!
I CAN ONLY KEEP THE PEACE, AND CONTINUE TO SERVE MY PEOPLE IF I AM SET FREE!
AND, YET, I VOWED TO ACCEPT THE VERDICT OF THIS COURT!
HOW CAN I HONOR THAT VOW KNOWING THAT SO MANY INNOCENTS WILL DIE BECAUSE OF IT?!

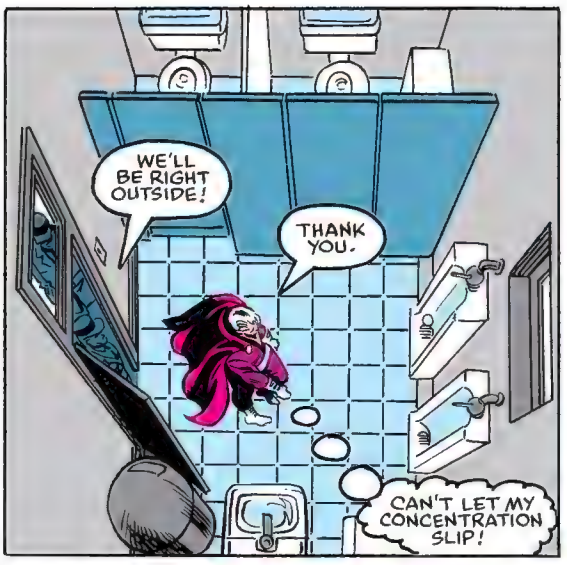

SOMETIME LATER...
IT'S ALMOST OVER...
...THE JUDGES HAVE PROMISED A VERDICT BY TOMORROW.
IT'S BEEN A FASCINATING OPPORTUNITY TO SEE INTERNATIONAL LAW IN ACTION. THE ISSUES ARE SO COMPLEX!
UH-OH! I SUDDENLY FEEL VERY STRANGE--!
IT'S ALMOST AS IF SOME OUTSIDE FORCE IS TUGGING AT ME!
MIGHT AS WELL CHECK IT OUT!
I WAS RIGHT! SOMEONE HAS BEEN TRYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH ME ON THE ELECTRO-MAGNETIC SPECTRUM--AND HE WANTS ME TO MEET HIM ACROSS TOWN!
CAPTAIN MARVEL! I MUST APOLOGIZE FOR MY ABRUPT SUMMONS, BUT I AM CERTAIN THAT YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR HASTE ONCE I'VE EXPLAINED THE SITUATION!
WHAT'S WRONG, MAGNETO?
THE WORLD IS ON THE BRINK OF A DEVASTATING WAR, AND YOU ALONE CAN HELP AVERT IT!
YOU MUST FLY TO SINGAPORE, FIND THE GIRL-CHILD LEIKO, AND ARRANGE WITH HER SPONSOR--A MUTANT KNOWN AS THE LIGHT--TO SEND HER HERE IMMEDIATELY.
WHY? WHAT'S HAPPENED?!
I HAVE FINALLY REALIZED WHY CHIEF JUSTICE DU MOTIER HAS BEEN AGAINST ME FROM THE VERY START!
HE'S SECRETLY A MUTANT HIMSELF--A RADICAL--WHO MEANS TO MARTYR ME!
LEIKO CAN DETECT OTHER MUTANTS!
I NEED HER TO EXPOSE DU MOTIER BEFORE HE CAN USE MY DEATH TO SPARK AN INSANE WAR BETWEEN MUTANTKIND AND HUMANITY!
I THINK YOU'RE GRASPING AT STRAWS, MAGNETO--BUT, THE AVENGERS DID PROMISE YOU A FAIR TRIAL--SO I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP!


CONVERTING HER BODY INTO LIVING ENERGY, CAPTAIN MARVEL STREAKS ACROSS THE GLOBE AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT...
... UNAWARE THAT MAGNETO'S CONSCIOUSNESS RIDES MAGNETICALLY ALONGSIDE...
AND, BARELY A MOMENT LATER...
THERE'S THE SHIP MAGNETO DESCRIBED!
I JUST HOPE HIS FRIENDS ARE STILL HERE!
BUT, INSIDE...
MY GOD--!
Y-YOU WERE WITH THE ONES WHO TOOK MAGNETO FROM US!
H-HE COULD HAVE PREVENTED THIS!
WHAT HAPPENED HERE? WHO DID THIS?!
C-CRAZIES! MAGNETO'S TRIAL BROUGHT THEM OUT OF HIDING! MADE THEM THINK IT'S SAFE TO HUNT--TO KILL US!!
BUT, WE'LL STRIKE BACK! I GATHERED UP MAGNETO'S OLD HELMET AND HIS DISCARDED CIRCUITRY AS A SYMBOL OF OUR STRENGTH--OUR FURY!!
THE GIRL... LEIKO... WHERE IS SHE?
SHE WAS OUR MOST PRECIOUS FLOWER... OUR HOPE... OUR FUTURE...
THERE SHE LIES--
--AS BROKEN AND TWISTED AS ALL OUR OTHER DREAMS!

LATER, AS CAPTAIN MARVEL FLASHES BACK TOWARD PARIS...
THAT OLD MAN BEGGED ME NOT TO NOTIFY THE AUTHORITIES! OTHER MUTANTS WERE ALREADY ON THEIR WAY OVER TO TREAT THE WOUNDED, AND HE FEARED FOR THEIR SAFETY AS WELL!
PERHAPS I SHOULDN'T HAVE LISTENED TO HIM...
IT'S ONLY BEEN ABOUT TEN MINUTES SINCE I LEFT MAGNETO!
I HAVE PLENTY OF TIME FOR A SMALL DETOUR--
--TO LOOK IN ON CHIEF JUSTICE DU MOTIER WHILE I'M STILL INVISIBLE IN MY NEUTRINO FORM!
...IT WAS AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT DECISION TO RENDER, ALEXANDRE.
INDEED, LADY SOUTHERLAND, ESPECIALLY WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THE CURRENT ANTI-MUTANT CLIMATE IN THE WORLD.
CONDEMNING MAGNETO TO DEATH COULD VERY WELL IGNITE A WAR BETWEEN MUTANTS AND MEN.
OF COURSE, FROM MANKIND'S POINT OF VIEW, NOW IS THE TIME FOR SUCH A WAR...WHEN IT COULD WIN.
WHO KNOWS HOW POWERFUL MUTANTS COULD GROW IN THE FUTURE?
TO MANKIND!
AHEM, I WOULD PREFER TO DRINK TO JUSTICE! YOUR WORDS SMACK OF RACISM.


MINUTES LATER...
SO DU MOTIER IS HUMAN! I KNEW HE WANTED WAR--BUT I TOTALLY MISINTERPRETED HIS REASONS.
AND THEY'VE DECIDED TO CONDEMN ME--?
NO... I COULDN'T TELL WHICH WAY THEY VOTED.
PLEASE LEAVE ME NOW. I MUST PREPARE MYSELF FOR TOMORROW.
BUT--
PLEASE, I WISH TO BE ALONE.
AS YOU WISH.
I GAVE MY WORD TO ABIDE BY THE COURT'S DECISION.
BUT, HOW CAN I MEEKLY SUBMIT TO MY FATE WHEN IT MAY CAUSE THE EXTERMINATION OF MUTANTKIND?!
AM I RATIONALIZING?
IS IT ONLY DEATH I REALLY FEAR?
NO! I CANNOT PERMIT THE SLAUGHTER OF MY PEOPLE!
I MUST BE STRONG, AND CONCENTRATE... CONCENTRATE...
AND, MERE MOMENTS LATER, HALF A WORLD AWAY...
BEHOLD--!
THE HOUR OF OUR VENGEANCE IS AT HAND!

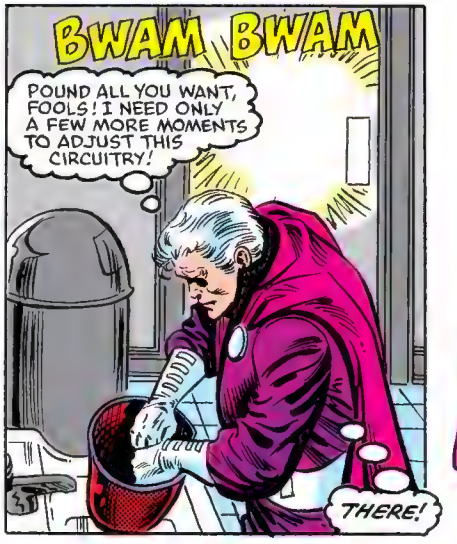

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING...
...STATEMENTS WHICH MADE DU MOTIER SOUND LIKE A RACIST!
WE HAVE NO PROOF THAT HE ACTUALLY HOLDS THOSE OPINIONS, OR THAT HE LET THEM AFFECT HIS JUDGMENT IN THIS CASE.
SSH! MAGNETO JUST ENTERED THE COURTROOM.
THE FACES OF THE X-MEN GROW GRIM, TAUT.
THEY EXPECT THE WORST.
THEY ARE RARELY DISAPPOINTED.
HOWEVER, AT THAT PRECISE INSTANT--
--A FUSE BOX THREE FLOORS BELOW SUDDENLY CHOOSES TO MALFUNCTION...
FSSST
AND...
THE LIGHTS--!
OF ALL THE TIMES FOR A BLACKOUT!
IT WILL TAKE A FEW MINUTES BEFORE REPAIRS CAN BE MADE.
I WOULD PREFER TO SPEND THAT TIME IN SOLITUDE.
OF COURSE.
THIS COULDN'T BE MERE COINCIDENCE!
MAGNETO'S STALLING FOR TIME! WHY? WHAT'S HIS PLAN?


WE'LL BE RIGHT OUTSIDE!
THANK YOU.
CAN'T LET MY CONCENTRATION SLIP!

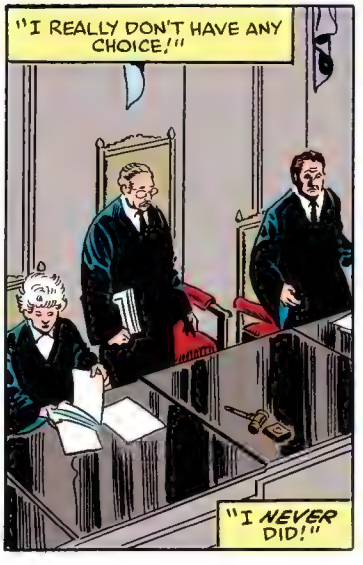
THE STRAIN IS INCREDIBLE, BUT I CAN'T FAIL! IT'S SO CLOSE! ONLY A FEW MILES MORE, AND--

KRASHH

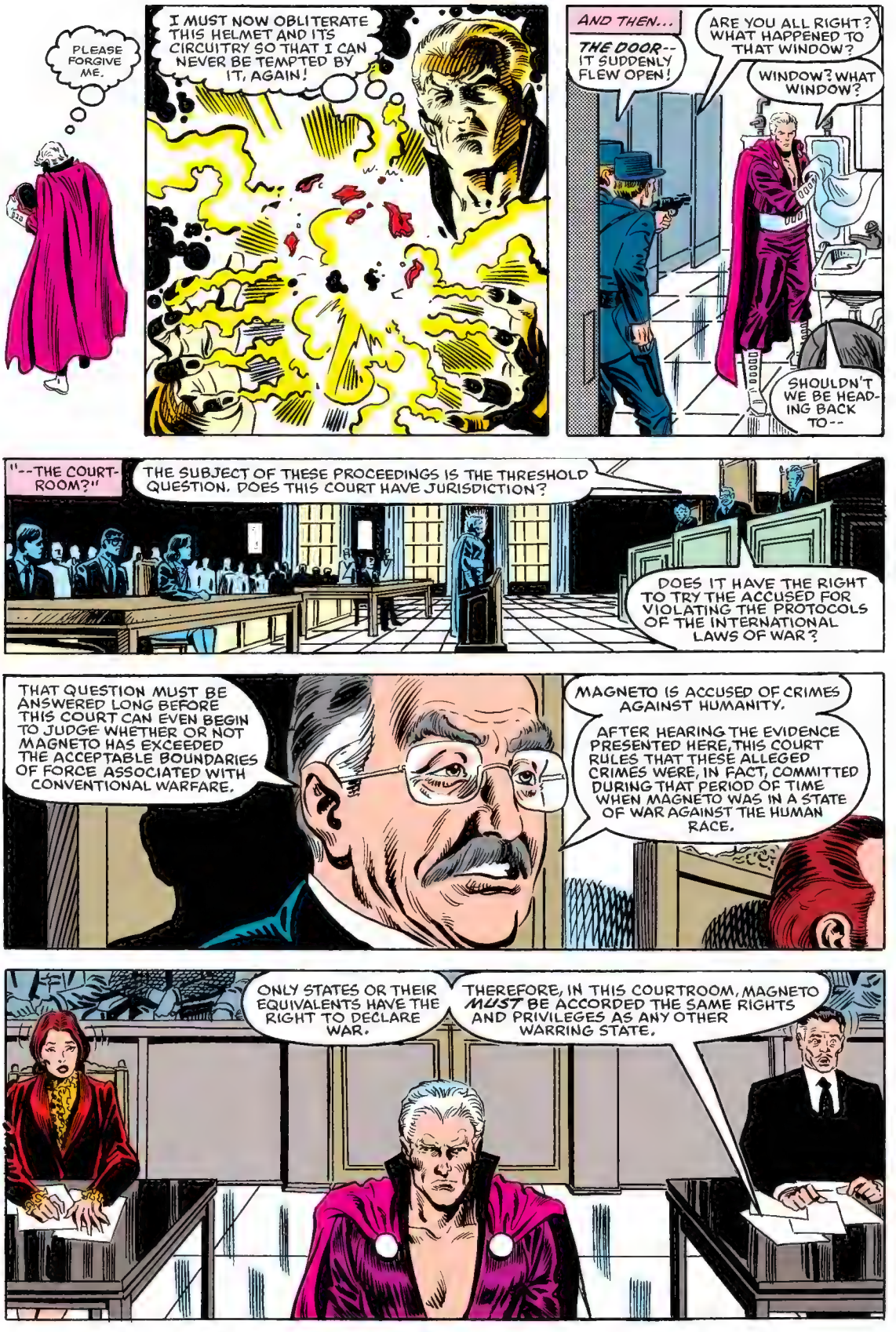
THAT SOUNDED LIKE A WINDOW SHATTERING!
HEY! THE DOOR'S STUCK! IT WON'T OPEN!


BWAM BWAM
POUND ALL YOU WANT, FOOLS! I NEED ONLY A FEW MORE MOMENTS TO ADJUST THIS CIRCUITRY!
THERE!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? WHY DO I HESITATE?!
I'M ONLY DOING WHAT MUST BE DONE!

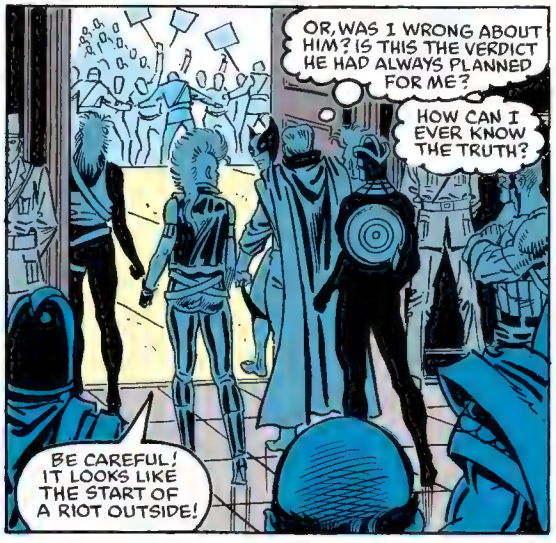

"I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE!"
"I NEVER DID!"

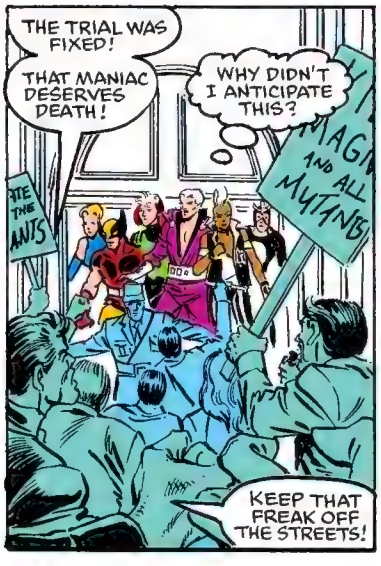
UGN
CHIEF JUSTICE, ARE YOU WELL?


PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
I MUST NOW OBLITERATE THIS HELMET AND ITS CIRCUITRY SO THAT I CAN NEVER BE TEMPTED BY IT, AGAIN!
AND THEN...
THE DOOR-- IT SUDDENLY FLEW OPEN!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT WINDOW?
WINDOW? WHAT WINDOW?
SHOULDN'T WE BE HEADING BACK TO--
"--THE COURTROOM?"
THE SUBJECT OF THESE PROCEEDINGS IS THE THRESHOLD QUESTION. DOES THIS COURT HAVE JURISDICTION?
DOES IT HAVE THE RIGHT TO TRY THE ACCUSED FOR VIOLATING THE PROTOCOLS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LAWS OF WAR?
THAT QUESTION MUST BE ANSWERED LONG BEFORE THIS COURT CAN EVEN BEGIN TO JUDGE WHETHER OR NOT MAGNETO HAS EXCEEDED THE ACCEPTABLE BOUNDARIES OF FORCE ASSOCIATED WITH CONVENTIONAL WARFARE.
MAGNETO IS ACCUSED OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY.
AFTER HEARING THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED HERE, THIS COURT RULES THAT THESE ALLEGED CRIMES WERE, IN FACT, COMMITTED DURING THAT PERIOD OF TIME WHEN MAGNETO WAS IN A STATE OF WAR AGAINST THE HUMAN RACE.
ONLY STATES OR THEIR EQUIVALENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECLARE WAR.
THEREFORE, IN THIS COURTROOM, MAGNETO MUST BE ACCORDED THE SAME RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES AS ANY OTHER WARRING STATE.

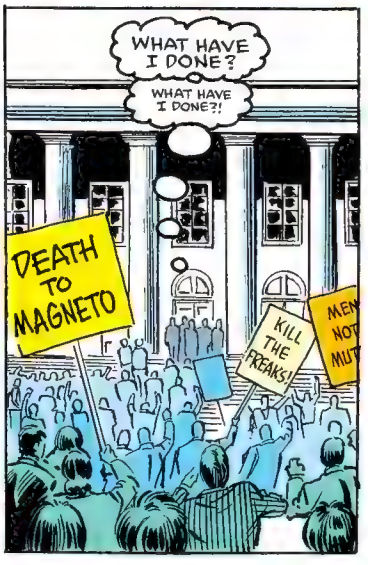
SINCE HE HAS NEVER SIGNED THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS, IT IS THE OPINION OF THIS COURT THAT IT HAS *NO JURISDICTION* OVER THE ACCUSED.
WHILE MAGNETO MAY HAVE VIOLATED THE LAWS OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL STATES AND NATIONS, AND MAY STILL BE LIABLE TO THEIR JUSTICE, THIS COURT HAS NO RIGHT TO JUDGE HIM.
HE IS FREE TO GO!

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU MADE IT!
YES...
WHY AREN'T THE OTHER JUDGES RAISING THEIR VOICES IN PROTEST OVER *DU MOTIER'S* SUDDEN CHANGE OF HEART?


OR, WAS I WRONG ABOUT HIM? IS THIS THE VERDICT HE HAD ALWAYS PLANNED FOR ME?
HOW CAN I EVER KNOW THE TRUTH?
BE CAREFUL! IT LOOKS LIKE THE START OF A RIOT OUTSIDE!

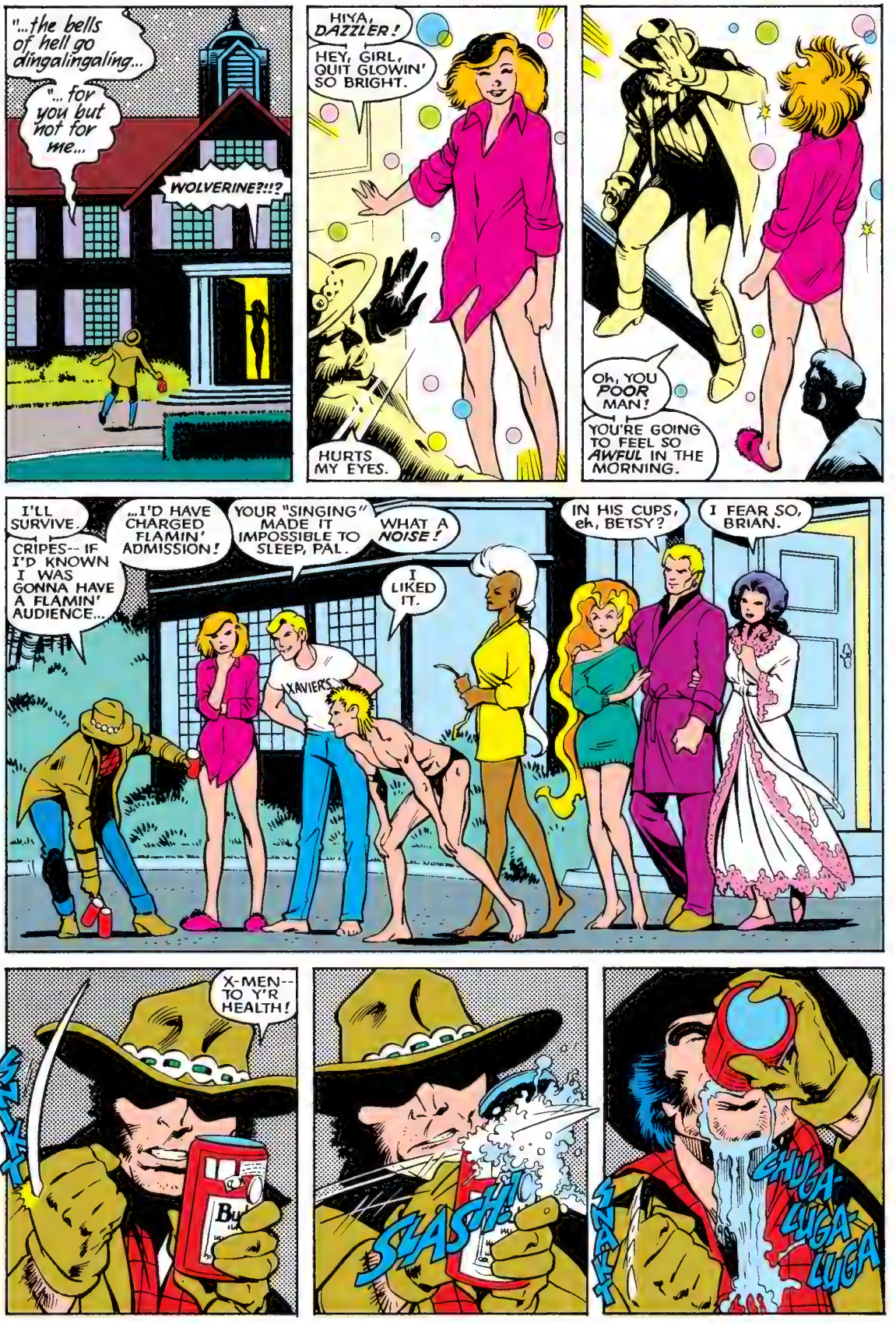

THE TRIAL WAS FIXED!
THAT MANIAC DESERVES DEATH!
WHY DIDN'T I ANTICIPATE THIS?
KEEP THAT FREAK OFF THE STREETS!

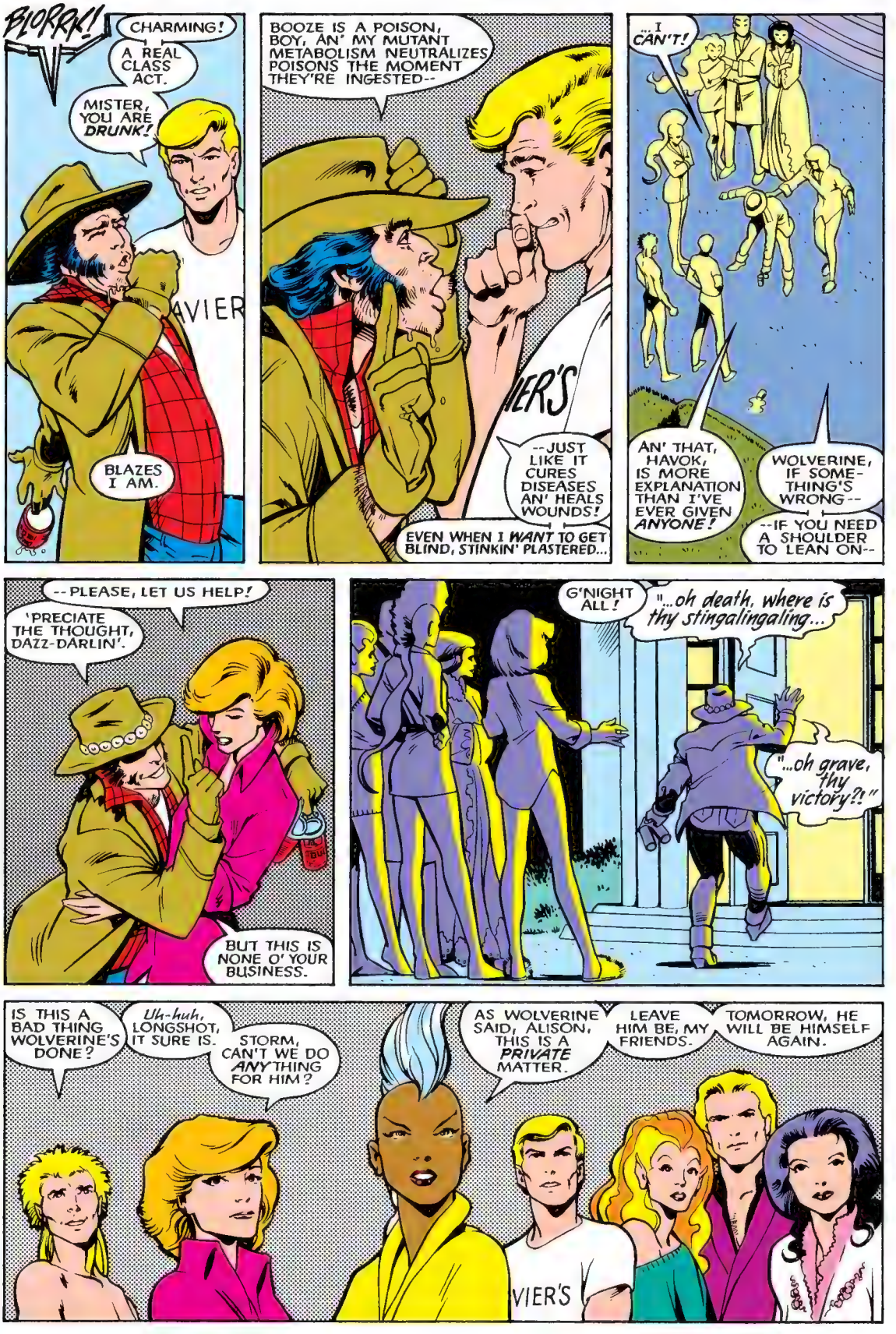
I WAS SO CONCERNED WITH THE EFFECTS MY DEATH WOULD HAVE ON MUTANTKIND--I NEVER ONCE CONSIDERED HOW MUCH MY FREEDOM WOULD *ENRAGE* MANKIND--WOULD INCREASE THEIR *HATRED* AND *FEAR* OF US!
WILL THIS SET OFF THE WAR THAT I FEARED--AND SOUND THE DEATH KNELL OF ALL MUTANTKIND?!

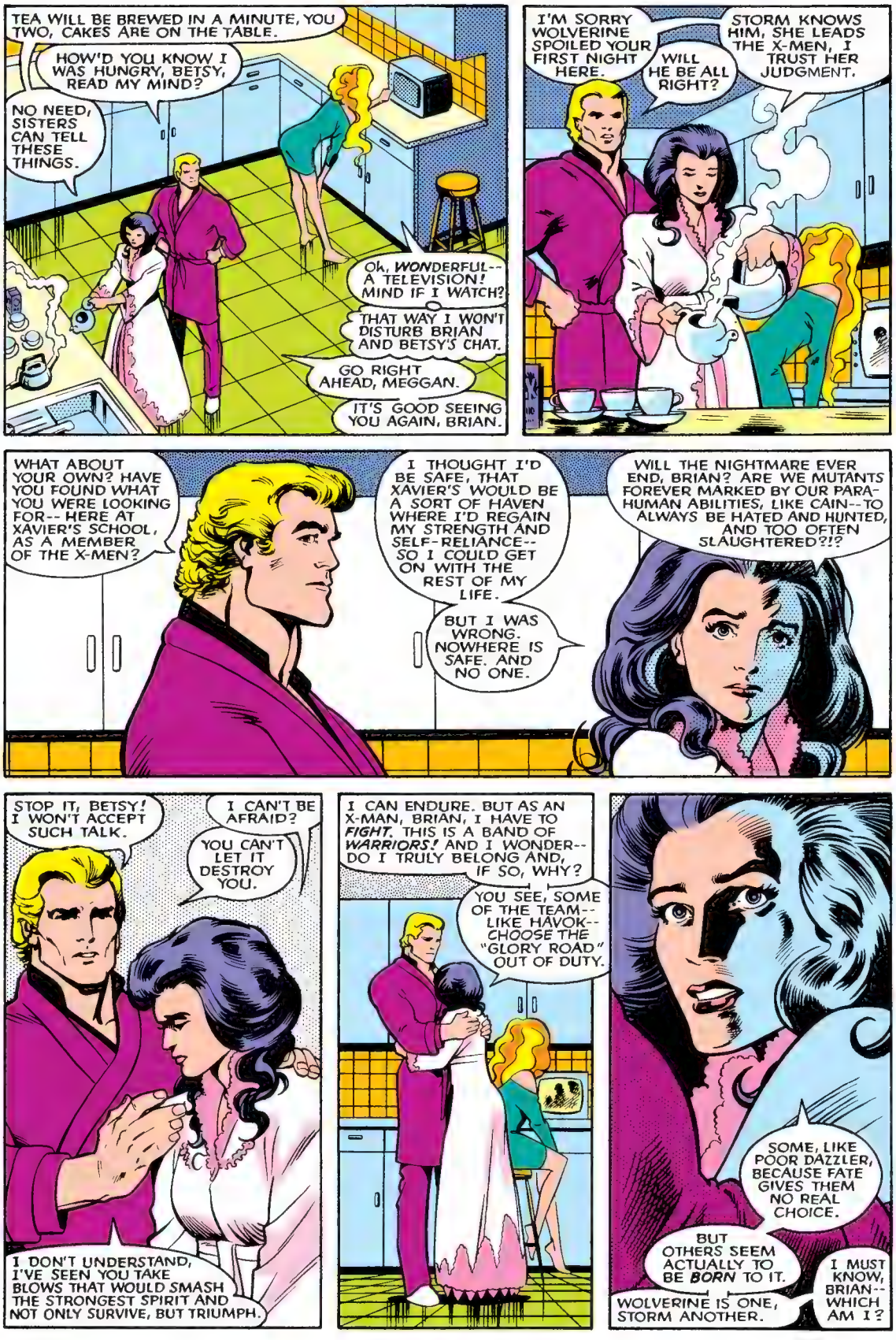

WHAT HAVE I DONE?
WHAT HAVE I DONE?!
DEATH TO MAGNETO
KILL THE FREAKS!

MARVEL
GIANT-SIZED ANNUAL
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
TM
© 1987 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
$1.25 US
$1.75 CAN
11
1987
02938
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE
AUTHORITY
ALAN DAVIS/MARK FARMER

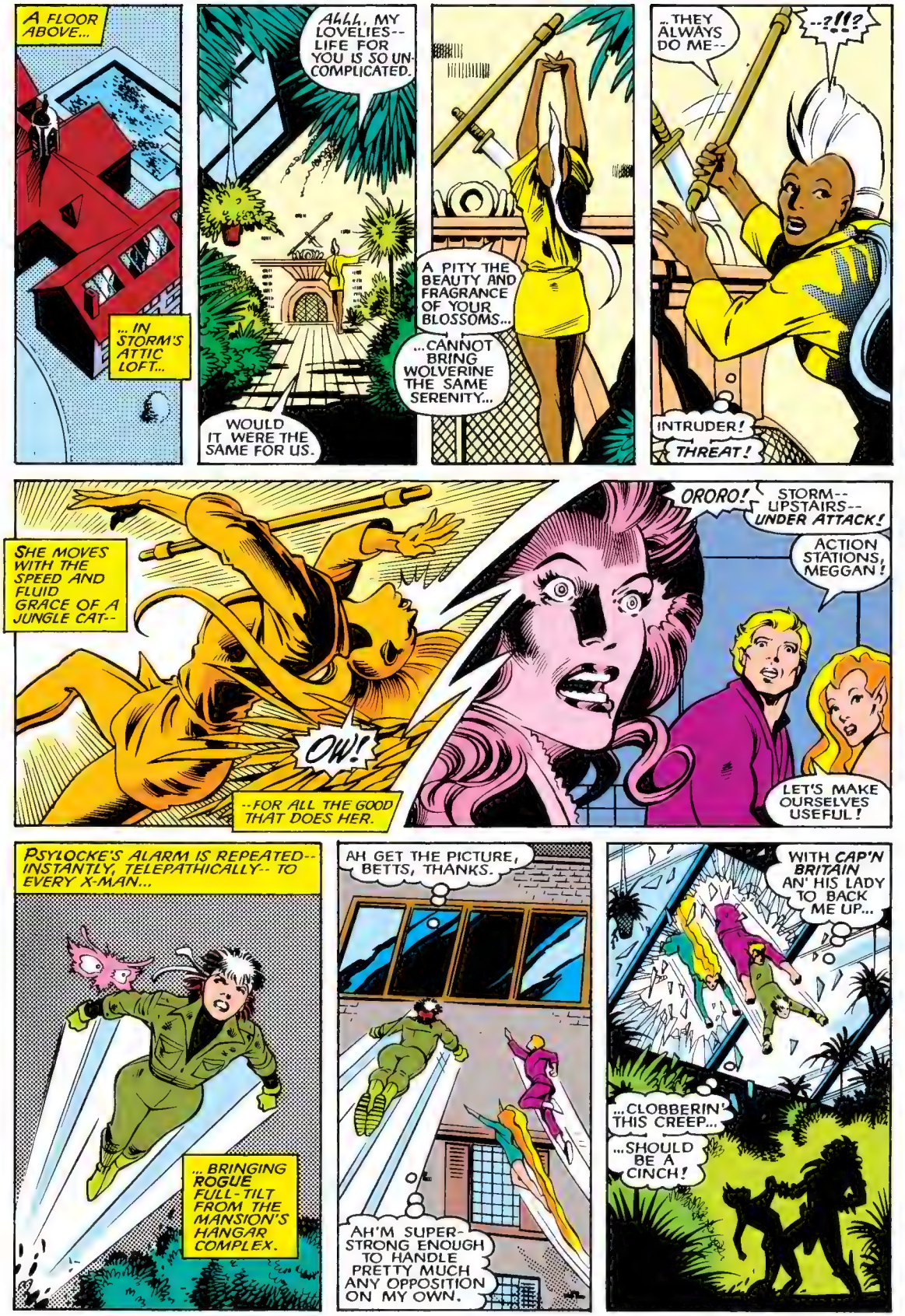
PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS-- SALEM CENTER, NEW YORK...
"Ohhhhhhhhhhh...
"...there's no place on Earth like the wurrrruld-- hic!"
"...there's nowhere that I'd rather be...
"...there's no place on Earth like the world-- URRP--
"--so sit up an' take it from me...
STAN LEE PRESENTS
Lost in the FUNHOUSE
STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN AND CAPTAIN BRITAIN
CHRIS CLAREMONT writer
ALAN DAVIS penciler
PAUL NEARY inker
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, letters
GLYNIS OLIVER, colors
ANN NOCENTI, editor
JIM SHOOTER editor in chief

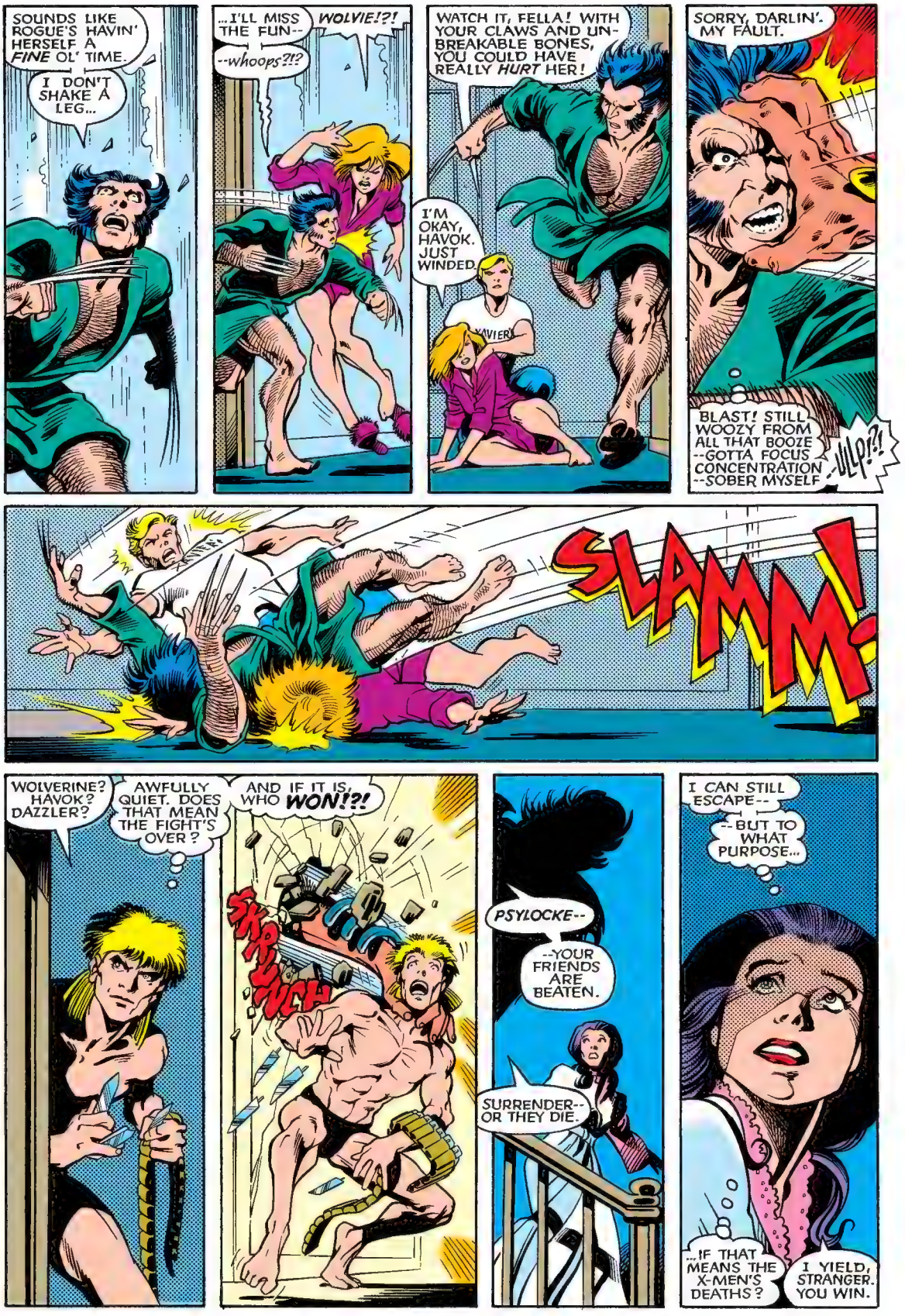

"...the bells of hell go dingalingaling...
"...for you but not for me...
WOLVERINE?!!?
HIYA, DAZZLER!
HEY, GIRL, QUIT GLOWIN' SO BRIGHT.
HURTS MY EYES.
Oh, YOU POOR MAN!
YOU'RE GOING TO FEEL SO AWFUL IN THE MORNING.
I'LL SURVIVE.
CRIPES-- IF I'D KNOWN I WAS GONNA HAVE A FLAMIN' AUDIENCE...
...I'D HAVE CHARGED FLAMIN' ADMISSION!
YOUR "SINGING" MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO SLEEP, PAL.
WHAT A NOISE!
I LIKED IT.
XAVIER'S
IN HIS CUPS, eh, BETSY?
I FEAR SO, BRIAN.
X-MEN-- TO Y'R HEALTH!
SLAM
SLASH
SLURP
CHUGA-LUGA-LUGA

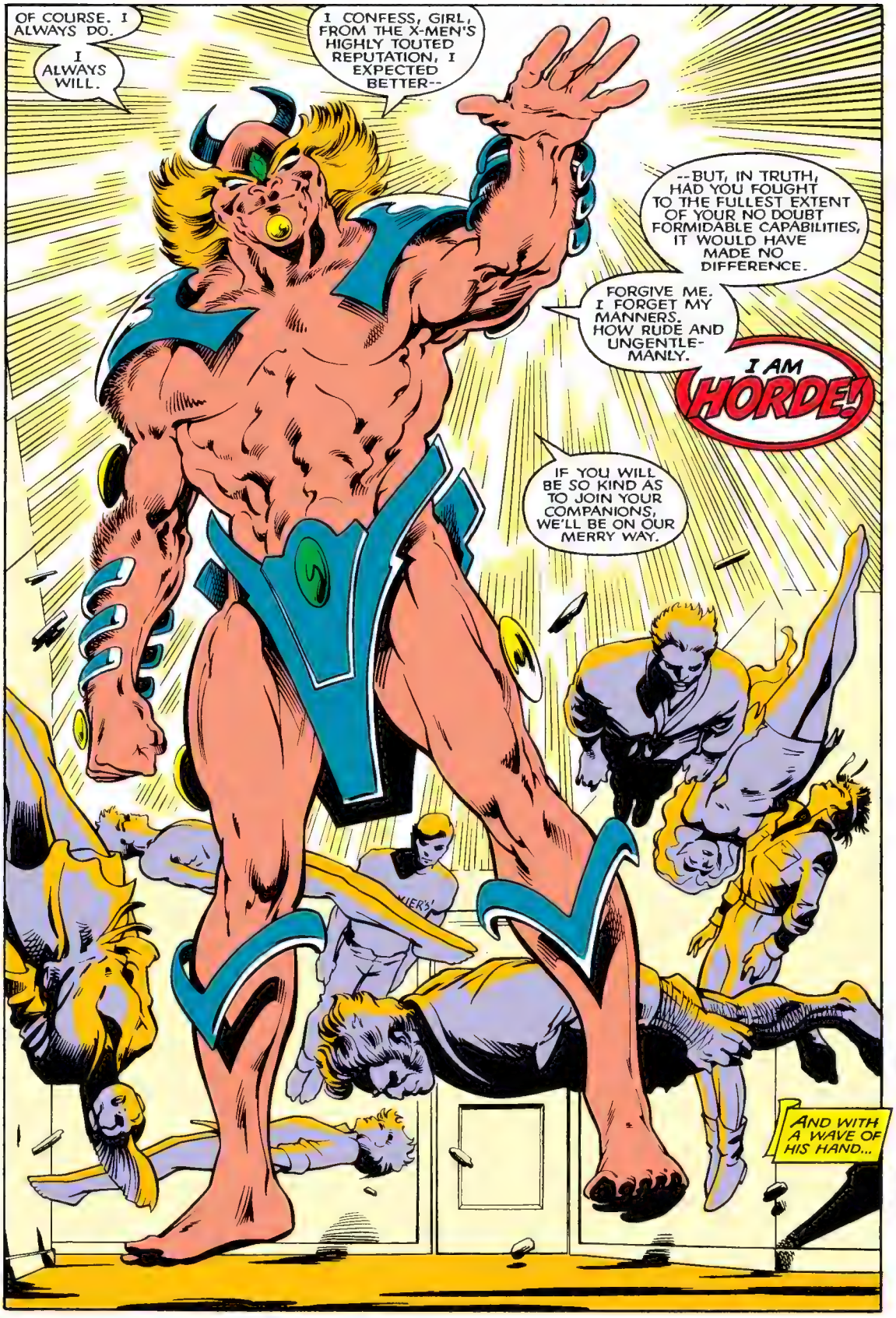

BLORRK!
CHARMING!
A REAL CLASS ACT.
MISTER, YOU ARE DRUNK!
BLAZES I AM.
BOOZE IS A POISON, BOY, AN' MY MUTANT METABOLISM NEUTRALIZES POISONS THE MOMENT THEY'RE INGESTED--
--JUST LIKE IT CURES DISEASES AN' HEALS WOUNDS!
EVEN WHEN I WANT TO GET BLIND, STINKIN' PLASTERED...
...I CAN'T!
AN' THAT, HAVOK, IS MORE EXPLANATION THAN I'VE EVER GIVEN ANYONE!
WOLVERINE, IF SOMETHING'S WRONG--
--IF YOU NEED A SHOULDER TO LEAN ON--
--PLEASE, LET US HELP!
'PRECIATE THE THOUGHT, DAZZ-DARLIN'.
BUT THIS IS NONE O' YOUR BUSINESS.
G'NIGHT ALL!
"...oh death, where is thy stingalingaling...
"...oh grave, thy victory?!"
IS THIS A BAD THING WOLVERINE'S DONE?
Uh-huh, LONGSHOT, IT SURE IS.
STORM, CAN'T WE DO ANYTHING FOR HIM?
AS WOLVERINE SAID, ALISON, THIS IS A PRIVATE MATTER.
LEAVE HIM BE, MY FRIENDS.
TOMORROW, HE WILL BE HIMSELF AGAIN.


TEA WILL BE BREWED IN A MINUTE, YOU TWO, CAKES ARE ON THE TABLE.
HOW'D YOU KNOW I WAS HUNGRY, BETSY, READ MY MIND?
NO NEED, SISTERS CAN TELL THESE THINGS.
Oh, WONDERFUL-- A TELEVISION! MIND IF I WATCH?
THAT WAY I WON'T DISTURB BRIAN AND BETSY'S CHAT.
GO RIGHT AHEAD, MEGGAN.
IT'S GOOD SEEING YOU AGAIN, BRIAN.
I'M SORRY WOLVERINE SPOILED YOUR FIRST NIGHT HERE.
WILL HE BE ALL RIGHT?
STORM KNOWS HIM, SHE LEADS THE X-MEN, I TRUST HER JUDGMENT.
WHAT ABOUT YOUR OWN? HAVE YOU FOUND WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR-- HERE AT XAVIER'S SCHOOL, AS A MEMBER OF THE X-MEN?
I THOUGHT I'D BE SAFE, THAT XAVIER'S WOULD BE A SORT OF HAVEN WHERE I'D REGAIN MY STRENGTH AND SELF-RELIANCE-- SO I COULD GET ON WITH THE REST OF MY LIFE.
BUT I WAS WRONG. NOWHERE IS SAFE. AND NO ONE.
WILL THE NIGHTMARE EVER END, BRIAN? ARE WE MUTANTS FOREVER MARKED BY OUR PARA-HUMAN ABILITIES, LIKE CAIN--TO ALWAYS BE HATED AND HUNTED, AND TOO OFTEN SLAUGHTERED?!?
STOP IT, BETSY! I WON'T ACCEPT SUCH TALK.
I CAN'T BE AFRAID?
YOU CAN'T LET IT DESTROY YOU.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND, I'VE SEEN YOU TAKE BLOWS THAT WOULD SMASH THE STRONGEST SPIRIT AND NOT ONLY SURVIVE, BUT TRIUMPH.
I CAN ENDURE. BUT AS AN X-MAN, BRIAN, I HAVE TO FIGHT. THIS IS A BAND OF WARRIORS! AND I WONDER-- DO I TRULY BELONG AND, IF SO, WHY?
YOU SEE, SOME OF THE TEAM-- LIKE HAVOK-- CHOOSE THE "GLORY ROAD" OUT OF DUTY.
SOME, LIKE POOR DAZZLER, BECAUSE FATE GIVES THEM NO REAL CHOICE.
BUT OTHERS SEEM ACTUALLY TO BE BORN TO IT.
WOLVERINE IS ONE, STORM ANOTHER.
I MUST KNOW, BRIAN-- WHICH AM I?

UPSTAIRS AND SIDEWAYS FROM THE KITCHEN--
--IN THE X-MEN'S RESIDENTIAL WING OF THIS STATELY, VENERABLE HUDSON VALLEY MANSION--
--IS WOLVERINE'S ROOM...
...WHOSE FURNISHINGS ARE AS ECLECTIC AND DICHOTOMOUS A MIX...
...AS IS THE MAN HIMSELF.
SOME RIGHTEOUS BINGE...
...EVEN BY MY STANDARDS.
AIN'T DULLED THE PAIN A BIT.
〈I SHOULD BE ASHAMED, MARIKO-CHAN...〉*
〈...FOR THE WAY I CHOSE TO "HONOR"...〉
*TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE-- A.
〈...THE ANNIVERSARY OF OUR WEDDING...〉
〈...THAT NEVER WAS.〉
〈YOU CALLED IT OFF, SENT ME AWAY, TOLD ME NOT TO RETURN...〉
〈...UNTIL YOU HAD PROVED YOURSELF WORTHY OF ME, AS I HAD OF YOU.〉
〈I SHOULD BE SAMURAI. I SHOULD BE STRONG.〉
〈BUT I LOVE YOU, MI'KO. HOW CAN ANY WARRIOR SURVIVE WHEN HE'S CUT OUT HIS HEART?!〉
〈AND YET--HOW CAN I NOT, IN HONOR, RESPECT YOUR WISHES?〉
WOLVERINE WOULDN'T. HE'D TAKE WHAT HE WANTED, THE DEVIL WITH RULES, MORALITY, HONOR.
BUT I'M LOGAN, TOO.
AND, LIKE IT OR NOT...
...LOGAN'S A MAN.
SOMETIMES THOUGH-- IT HURTS SO BAD MISSING YOU, THE WARRIOR'S WAY SEEMS SO HARD--
--FORGIVE ME, MARIKO. I FEEL AS THOUGH I'D GIVE MY SOUL FOR THINGS TO BE DIFFERENT.

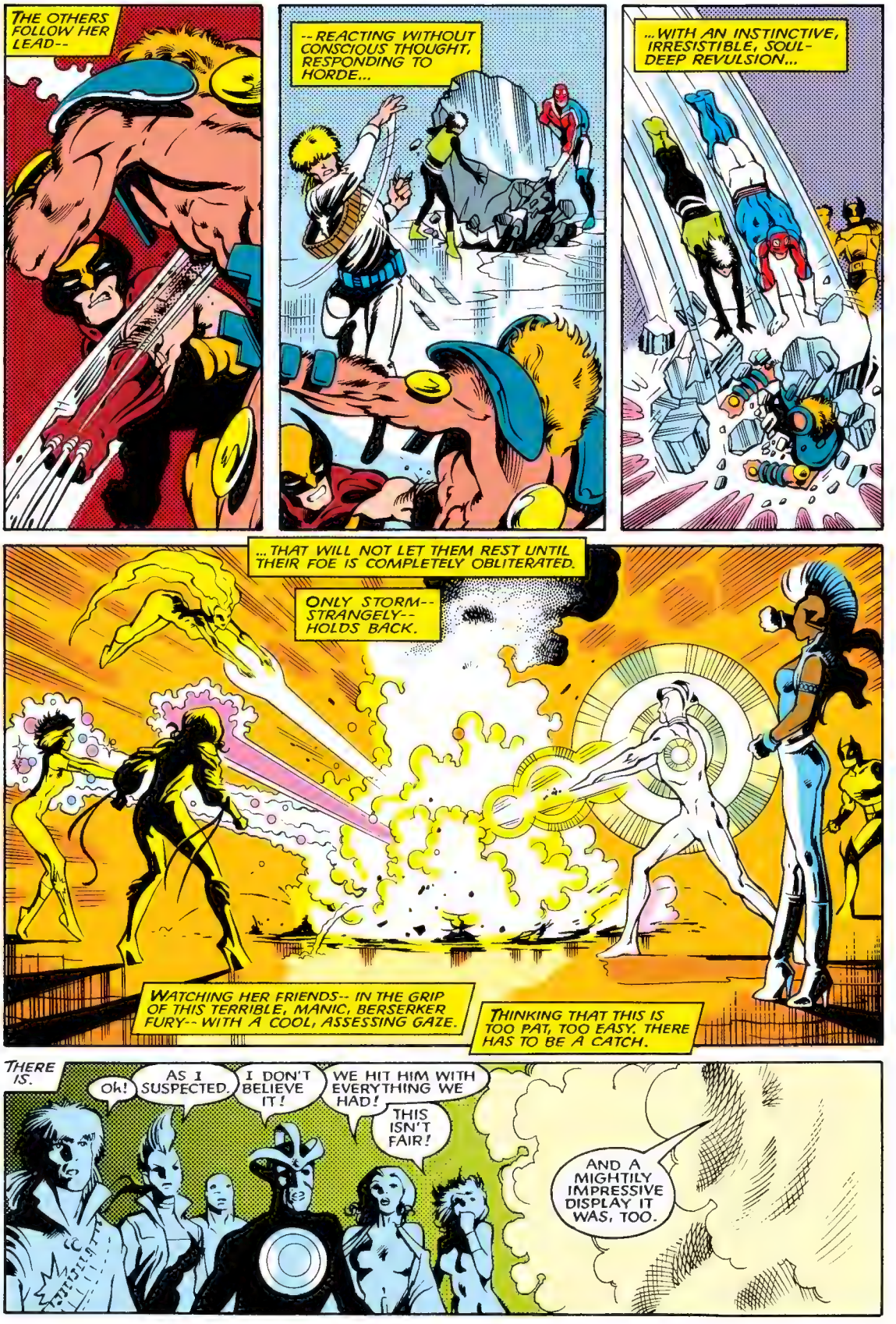

A FLOOR ABOVE...
... IN STORM'S ATTIC LOFT...
AHHH, MY LOVELIES-- LIFE FOR YOU IS SO UN-COMPLICATED.
WOULD IT WERE THE SAME FOR US.
A PITY THE BEAUTY AND FRAGRANCE OF YOUR BLOSSOMS...
...CANNOT BRING WOLVERINE THE SAME SERENITY...
...THEY ALWAYS DO ME--
--?!!?
INTRUDER!
THREAT!
SHE MOVES WITH THE SPEED AND FLUID GRACE OF A JUNGLE CAT--
OW!
--FOR ALL THE GOOD THAT DOES HER.
ORORO!
STORM-- UPSTAIRS-- UNDER ATTACK!
ACTION STATIONS, MEGGAN!
LET'S MAKE OURSELVES USEFUL!
PSYLOCKE'S ALARM IS REPEATED-- INSTANTLY, TELEPATHICALLY-- TO EVERY X-MAN...
... BRINGING ROGUE FULL-TILT FROM THE MANSION'S HANGAR COMPLEX.
AH GET THE PICTURE, BETTS, THANKS.
AH'M SUPER-STRONG ENOUGH TO HANDLE PRETTY MUCH ANY OPPOSITION ON MY OWN.
WITH CAP'N BRITAIN AN' HIS LADY TO BACK ME UP...
...CLOBBERIN' THIS CREEP...
...SHOULD BE A CINCH!

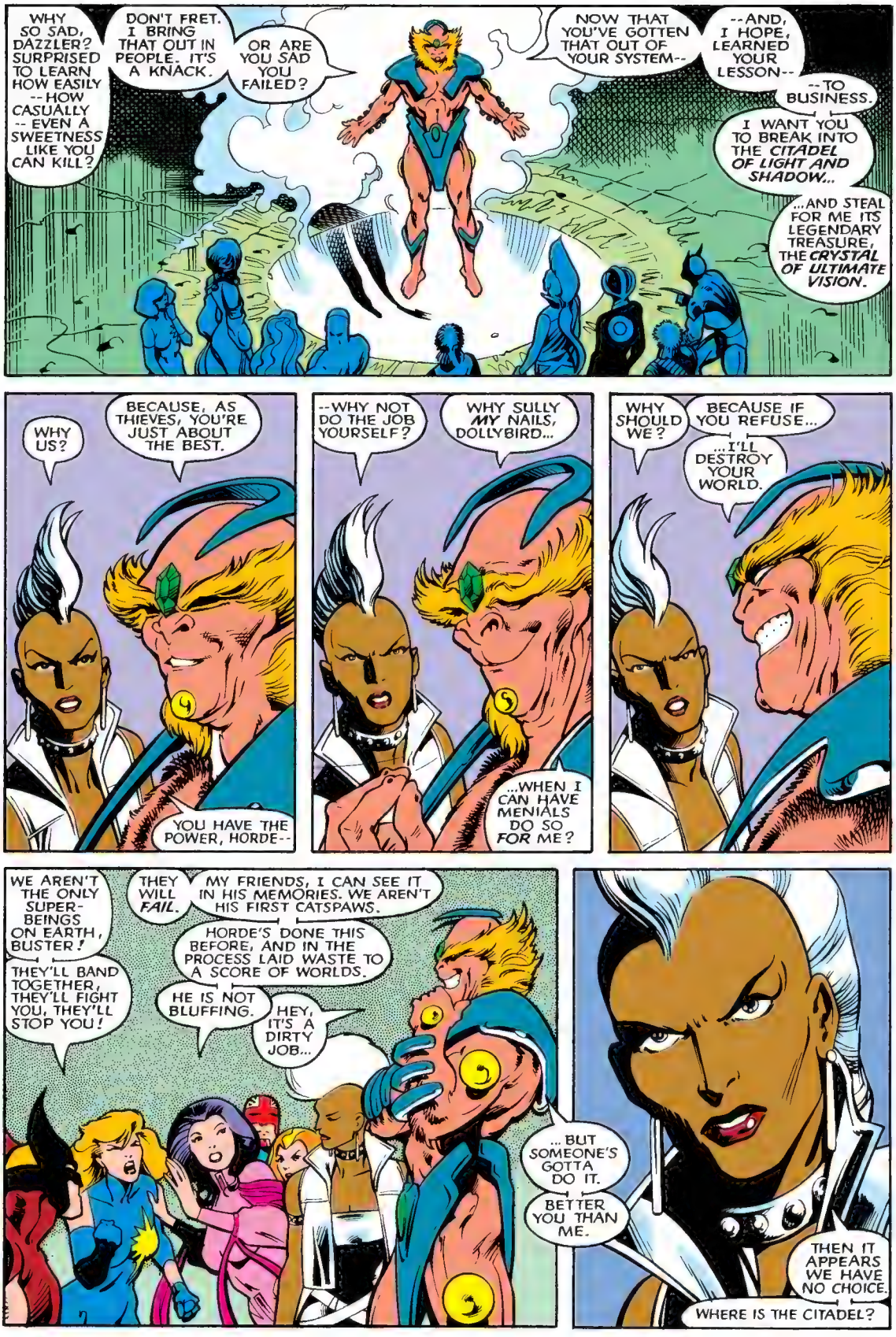

SOUNDS LIKE ROGUE'S HAVIN' HERSELF A FINE OL' TIME.
I DON'T SHAKE A LEG...
...I'LL MISS THE FUN--
WOLVIE!?!
--whoops?!?
WATCH IT, FELLA! WITH YOUR CLAWS AND UN-BREAKABLE BONES, YOU COULD HAVE REALLY HURT HER!
I'M OKAY, HAVOK. JUST WINDED.
XAVIER
SORRY, DARLIN'. MY FAULT.
BLAST! STILL WOOZY FROM ALL THAT BOOZE --GOTTA FOCUS CONCENTRATION --SOBER MYSELF
-ULP!?!
SLAMM!
WOLVERINE? HAVOK? DAZZLER?
AWFULLY QUIET. DOES THAT MEAN THE FIGHT'S OVER?
AND IF IT IS, WHO WON!?!
SKRUNCH
PSYLOCKE--
--YOUR FRIENDS ARE BEATEN.
SURRENDER-- OR THEY DIE.
I CAN STILL ESCAPE--
--BUT TO WHAT PURPOSE...
...IF THAT MEANS THE X-MEN'S DEATHS?
I YIELD, STRANGER. YOU WIN.

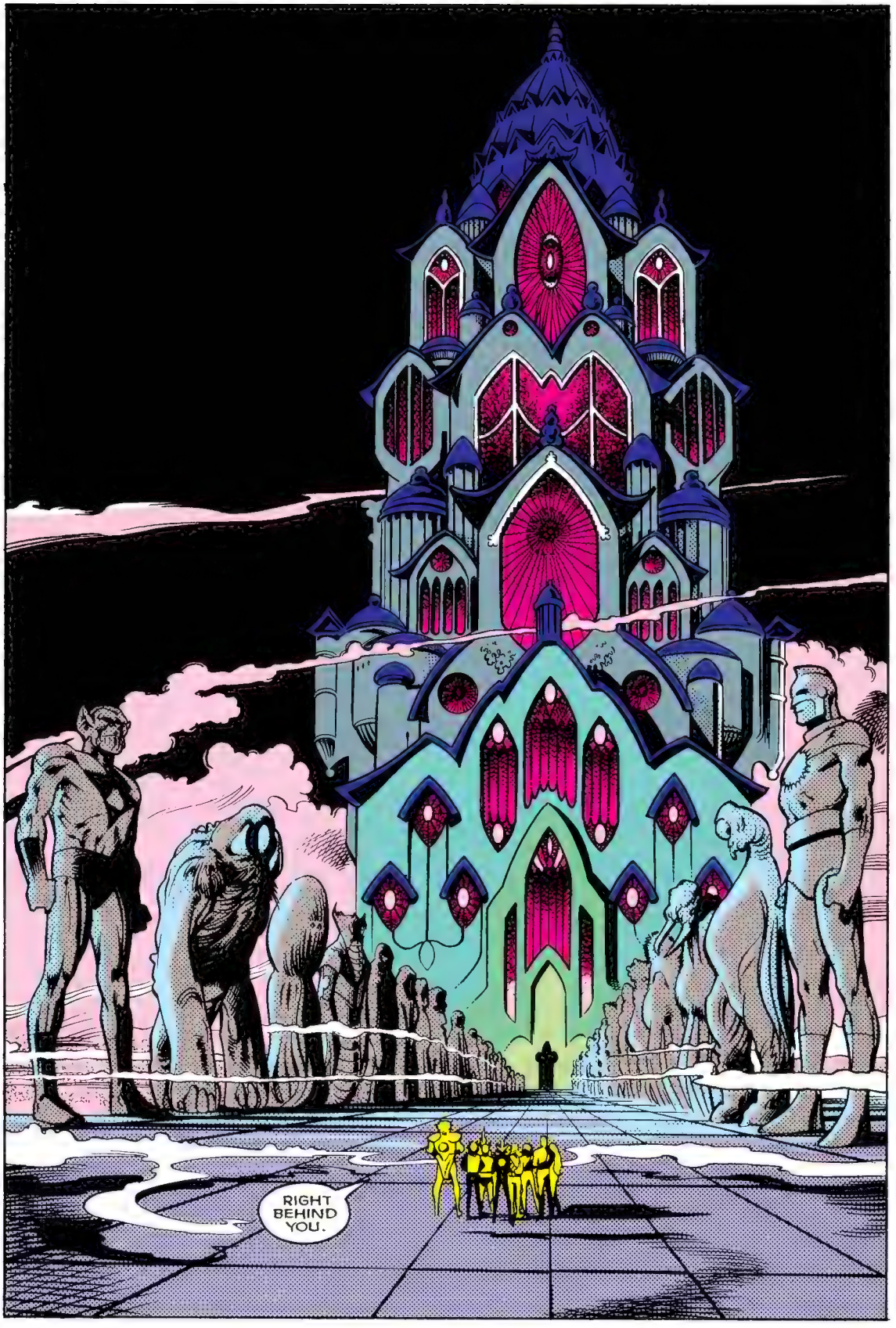

OF COURSE. I ALWAYS DO.
I ALWAYS WILL.
I CONFESS, GIRL, FROM THE X-MEN'S HIGHLY TOUTED REPUTATION, I EXPECTED BETTER--
--BUT, IN TRUTH, HAD YOU FOUGHT TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF YOUR NO DOUBT FORMIDABLE CAPABILITIES, IT WOULD HAVE MADE NO DIFFERENCE.
FORGIVE ME. I FORGET MY MANNERS. HOW RUDE AND UNGENTLE-MANLY.
I AM HORDE!
IF YOU WILL BE SO KIND AS TO JOIN YOUR COMPANIONS, WE'LL BE ON OUR MERRY WAY.
AND WITH A WAVE OF HIS HAND...

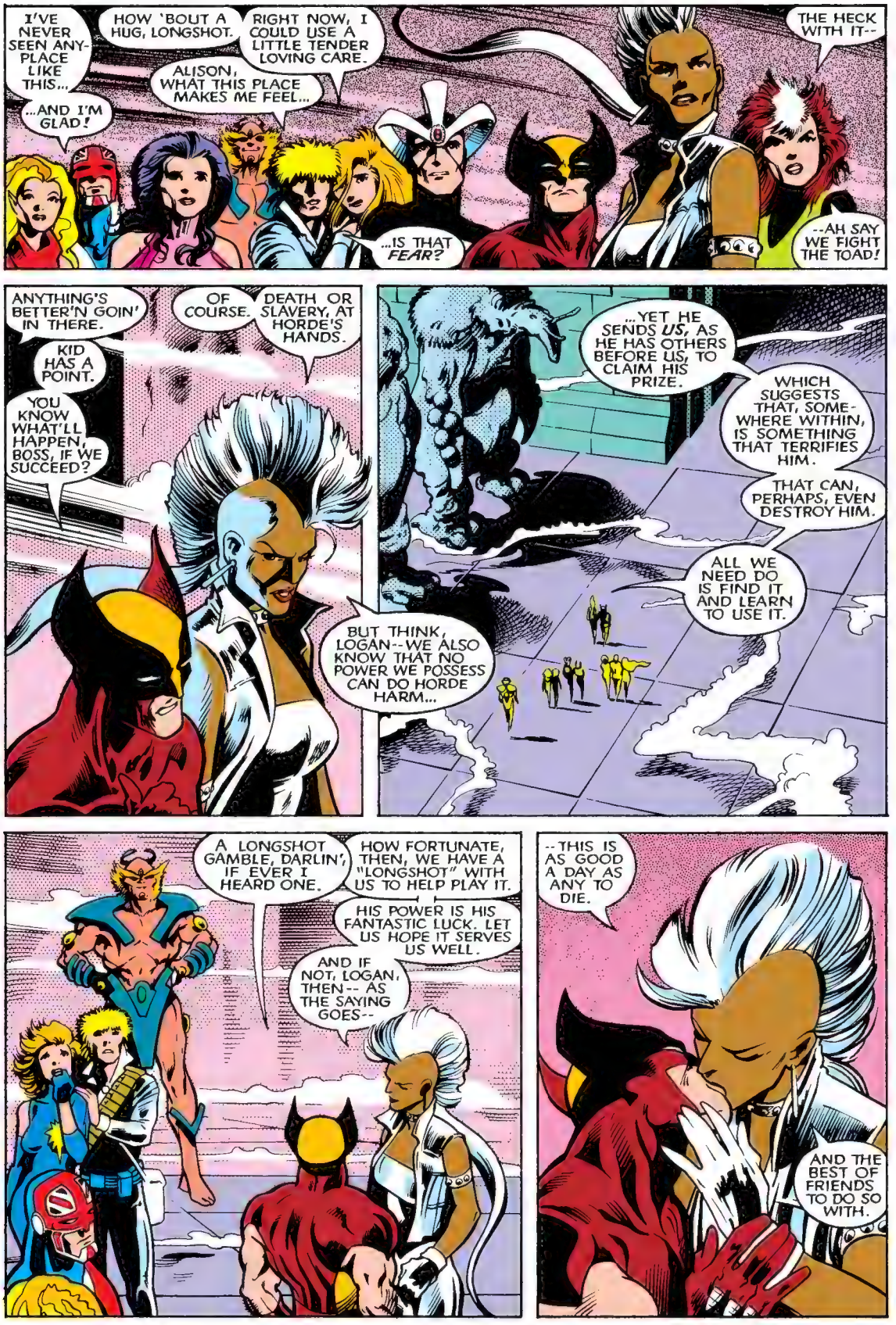
...THEY ARE.
WE ARE MUCH ALIKE, YOU KNOW. FOR I, TOO, AM A MUTANT...
...GIFTED WITH EXTRAORDINARY POWERS...
...THAT SET ME FOREVER APART FROM THE REST OF MY RACE.
HOWEVER, UNLIKE YOU SILLY SODS, I CHOOSE TO USE MINE, NOT TO PROTECT THE WEAK AND HELPLESS-- NOT FOR THE BETTERMENT OF HUMANITY--
--BUT TO RULE!
YOU FIGURE ON RULIN' US, BUB?
DEAR ME, NO, WOLVERINE.
THAT IS ALREADY AN ACCOMPLISHED FACT!
COME TO ME, STORM, MY PROUD BEAUTY. MAKE PROPER OBEISANCE TO YOUR NEW MASTER.
HOW FIERCELY SHE GLARES-- IF LOOKS COULD KILL, eh?
YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN DEFY ME?
EVIDENTLY, OUR INITIAL ENCOUNTER WAS AN INSUFFICIENT DEMONSTRATION OF MY POWER.
BEHOLD THEN, HOW EASILY I CLOTHE YOU IN YOUR FIGHTING GARB, HEALING ALL BUMPS AND BRUISES AND ACHES AND PAINS, RESTORING YOU TO PERFECT HEALTH AND PEAK CONDITION.
AS FOR YOU, STORM, PERHAPS WHEN YOU COMPLETE YOUR GREAT TASK--
--ASSUMING, OF COURSE, YOU PROVE YOURSELF WORTHY--
--I SHALL REWARD YOU...
...BY MAKING YOU MY CONSORT!

HAVING SOME FUN NOW, eh, KIDS?
CONSIDER THAT A TASTE OF TREATS TO COME.
SWINE!
AH GOTCHA, BOSS!
NOW, WHO'S THIS LOVELY CREATURE?
LEAVE MEGGAN BE!
CALM YOURSELF, CAPTAIN.
THIS IS NO TIME TO ACT PRECIPITOUSLY.
BETTER LISTEN, BIG BOY, SHE'S TALKING SENSE.
YOU HAVE NO INTEREST IN MEGGAN, HORDE.
OR ANY OF US.
NICE TRY, PSYLOCKE.
BUT YOUR MIND POWERS...
...WON'T WORK ON ME.
AND LONGSHOT'S INCREDIBLE LUCK...
...WON'T DO THE SLIGHTEST GOOD-- BECAUSE I'M THE LUCKY ONE HERE.
DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT, HAVOK?
POOR, DEAR LAD-- SO STRONG, SO ANGRY, SO HELPLESS.
THINKING OF ABSORBING MY POWERS AN' PSYCHE, "SUGAR?"
YOU CAN'T.
I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU, X-MEN. I RESEARCHED YOU METICULOUSLY. YOU'LL MAKE PERFECT SERVITORS FOR THE GREATEST CONQUEROR IN HISTORY, THE BEING YOU'RE ABOUT TO MAKE...
...LORD OF ALL CREATION!
THAT'S A TUNE WE'VE HEARD BEFORE.
TRUE GRIT, I LOVE IT!
THINK YOU'RE A MATCH FOR ME? TRY IT!
C'MON, HEROES, STEP RIGHT UP-- TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT!
YOU SNEERED BEFORE, MONSTER, ABOUT "LOOKS" THAT KILL!
WELL-- DAZZLER'S CAN!
SHE TRANDUCES SOUND TO LIGHT...
...UNLEASHING A LASER BLAST OF UNIMAGINABLE INTENSITY.

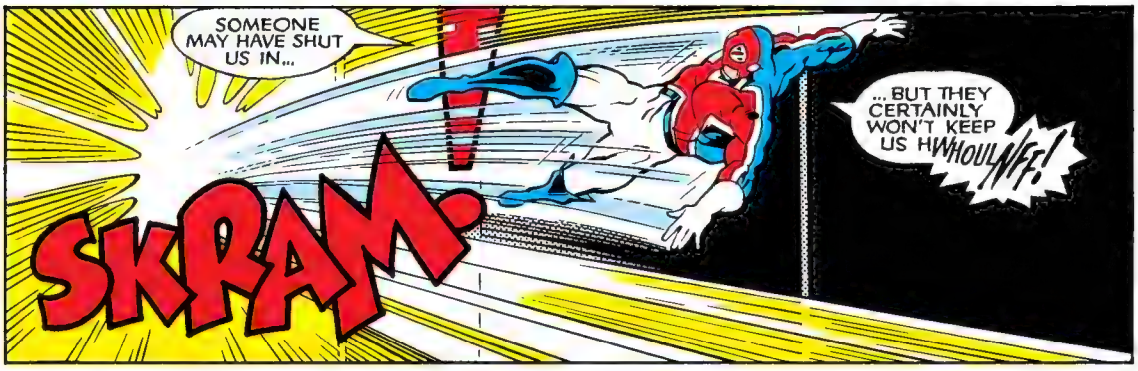

THE OTHERS FOLLOW HER LEAD--
--REACTING WITHOUT CONSCIOUS THOUGHT, RESPONDING TO HORDE...
...WITH AN INSTINCTIVE, IRRESISTIBLE, SOUL-DEEP REVULSION...
...THAT WILL NOT LET THEM REST UNTIL THEIR FOE IS COMPLETELY OBLITERATED.
ONLY STORM-- STRANGELY-- HOLDS BACK.
WATCHING HER FRIENDS-- IN THE GRIP OF THIS TERRIBLE, MANIC, BERSERKER FURY-- WITH A COOL, ASSESSING GAZE.
THINKING THAT THIS IS TOO PAT, TOO EASY. THERE HAS TO BE A CATCH.
THERE IS.
OH! AS I SUSPECTED.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
WE HIT HIM WITH EVERYTHING WE HAD!
THIS ISN'T FAIR!
AND A MIGHTILY IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY IT WAS, TOO.

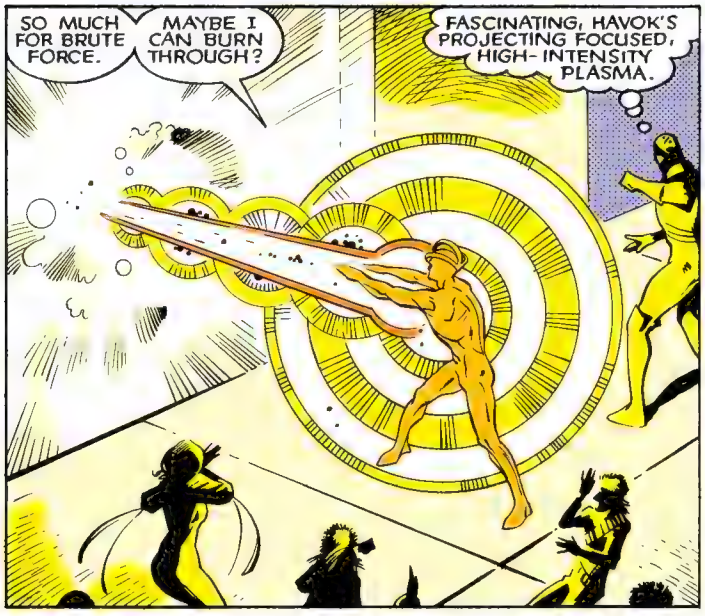

WHY SO SAD, DAZZLER? SURPRISED TO LEARN HOW EASILY --HOW CASUALLY -- EVEN A SWEETNESS LIKE YOU CAN KILL?
DON'T FRET. I BRING THAT OUT IN PEOPLE. IT'S A KNACK.
OR ARE YOU SAD YOU FAILED?
NOW THAT YOU'VE GOTTEN THAT OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM--
--AND, I HOPE, LEARNED YOUR LESSON--
--TO BUSINESS.
I WANT YOU TO BREAK INTO THE CITADEL OF LIGHT AND SHADOW...
...AND STEAL FOR ME ITS LEGENDARY TREASURE, THE CRYSTAL OF ULTIMATE VISION.
WHY US?
BECAUSE, AS THIEVES, YOU'RE JUST ABOUT THE BEST.
YOU HAVE THE POWER, HORDE--
--WHY NOT DO THE JOB YOURSELF?
WHY SULLY MY NAILS, DOLLYBIRD...
...WHEN I CAN HAVE MENIALS DO SO FOR ME?
WHY SHOULD WE?
BECAUSE IF YOU REFUSE...
...I'LL DESTROY YOUR WORLD.
WE AREN'T THE ONLY SUPER-BEINGS ON EARTH, BUSTER!
THEY'LL BAND TOGETHER, THEY'LL FIGHT YOU, THEY'LL STOP YOU!
THEY WILL FAIL.
MY FRIENDS, I CAN SEE IT IN HIS MEMORIES. WE AREN'T HIS FIRST CATSPAWS.
HORDE'S DONE THIS BEFORE, AND IN THE PROCESS LAID WASTE TO A SCORE OF WORLDS.
HE IS NOT BLUFFING.
HEY, IT'S A DIRTY JOB...
...BUT SOMEONE'S GOTTA DO IT.
BETTER YOU THAN ME.
THEN IT APPEARS WE HAVE NO CHOICE.
WHERE IS THE CITADEL?


RIGHT BEHIND YOU.


I'VE NEVER SEEN ANY-PLACE LIKE THIS...
...AND I'M GLAD!
HOW 'BOUT A HUG, LONGSHOT.
ALISON, WHAT THIS PLACE MAKES ME FEEL...
RIGHT NOW, I COULD USE A LITTLE TENDER LOVING CARE.
...IS THAT FEAR?
THE HECK WITH IT--
--AH SAY WE FIGHT THE TOAD!
ANYTHING'S BETTER'N GOIN' IN THERE.
KID HAS A POINT.
YOU KNOW WHAT'LL HAPPEN, BOSS, IF WE SUCCEED?
OF COURSE.
DEATH OR SLAVERY, AT HORDE'S HANDS.
BUT THINK, LOGAN--WE ALSO KNOW THAT NO POWER WE POSSESS CAN DO HORDE HARM...
...YET HE SENDS US, AS HE HAS OTHERS BEFORE US, TO CLAIM HIS PRIZE.
WHICH SUGGESTS THAT, SOMEWHERE WITHIN, IS SOMETHING THAT TERRIFIES HIM.
THAT CAN, PERHAPS, EVEN DESTROY HIM.
ALL WE NEED DO IS FIND IT AND LEARN TO USE IT.
A LONGSHOT GAMBLE, DARLIN', IF EVER I HEARD ONE.
HOW FORTUNATE, THEN, WE HAVE A "LONGSHOT" WITH US TO HELP PLAY IT.
HIS POWER IS HIS FANTASTIC LUCK. LET US HOPE IT SERVES US WELL.
AND IF NOT, LOGAN, THEN-- AS THE SAYING GOES--
--THIS IS AS GOOD A DAY AS ANY TO DIE.
AND THE BEST OF FRIENDS TO DO SO WITH.

WONDER WHAT THESE STATUES MEAN?
I RECOGNIZE THE TWO AT THE END...
WHO ARE THEY, HAVOK?
GREEN GUY'S A SKRULL, CAPTAIN.
THE OTHER'S A KREE. REAL NASTY PAIR OF RACES.
I SENSE NO PSI-SHIELDS ANYWHERE IN THIS CITADEL.
AND NO OTHER PRESENCES. WE ARE ALONE HERE.
I CONFIRM THAT. I SPOT NO LIVING SCENTS.
LOTSA DEADERS, THOUGH.
LONGSHOT, WHY ARE YOU HANGING BACK?
I DON'T KNOW, ALISON.
MY LEGS DON'T WANT TO WALK.
MY HEARTS DON'T WANT TO MAKE THEM.
HEY, PAL-O'-MINE, WE'RE ALL SCARED! COMES WITH THE TERRITORY WHEN YOU'RE A SUPER HERO.
DON'T WORRY, I'LL STAND BY YOU, NO MATTER WHAT. PARTNERS TO THE END.
PLEASE, LONGSHOT-- DON'T STAY BEHIND.
WE'RE X-MEN, WE'RE A TEAM, WE NEED YOU.
I NEED YOU.
OKAY.
THAT'S THE SPIRIT--
HUH?!?
SLAM


SOMEONE MAY HAVE SHUT US IN...
SKRAM
...BUT THEY CERTAINLY WON'T KEEP US HWHOULAFF!

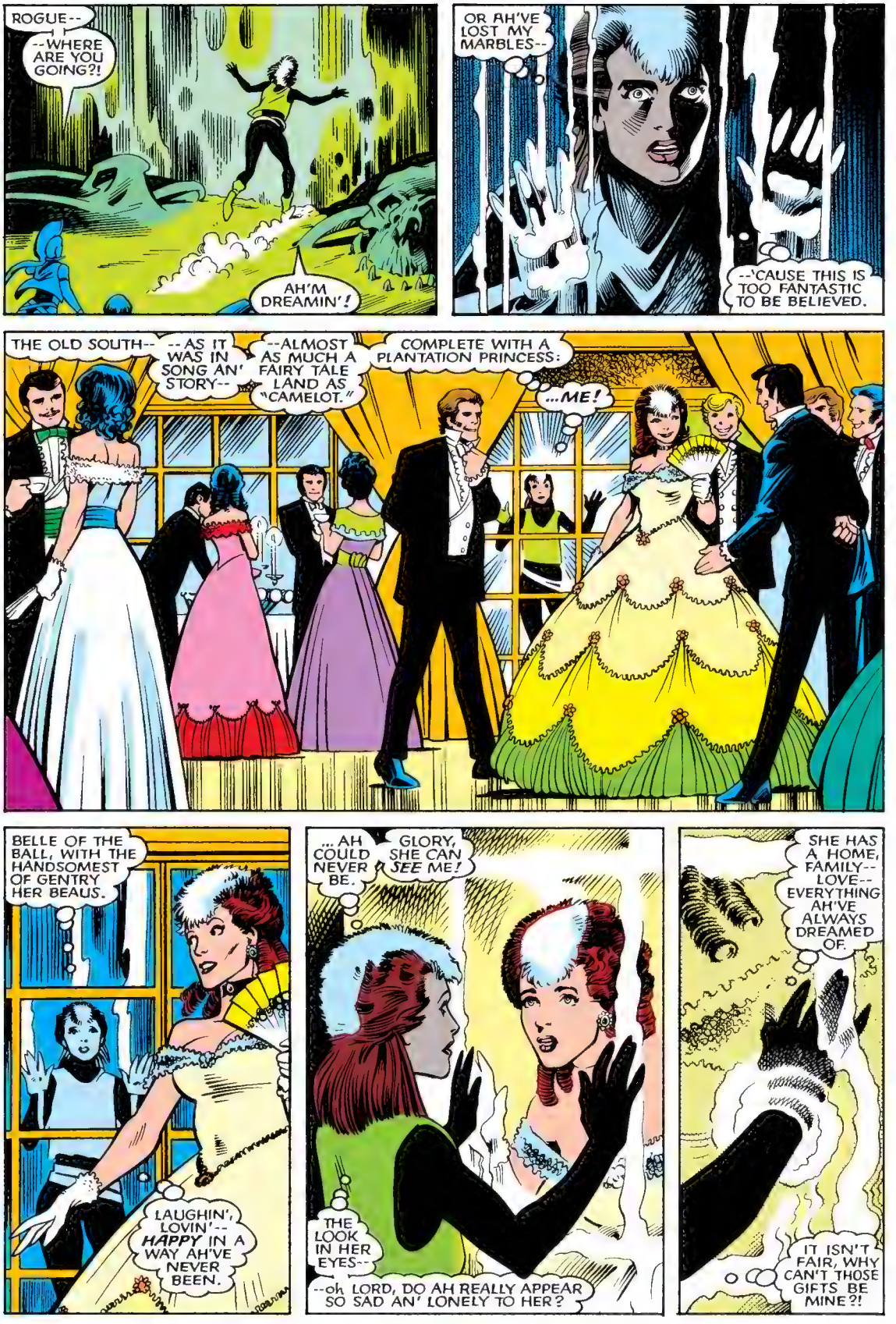

SO MUCH FOR BRUTE FORCE.
MAYBE I CAN BURN THROUGH?
FASCINATING, HAVOK'S PROJECTING FOCUSED, HIGH-INTENSITY PLASMA.

AS A PHYSICIST, I'D LOVE TO EXPLORE HOW HIS BODY METABOLIZES AND MANIPULATES SUCH ENERGIES.
NOT EVEN WARM.
LIKE KRELL METAL, IN THE MOVIE, "FORBIDDEN PLANET."
SORRY, FOLKS, I'M AFRAID WE'RE STUCK.

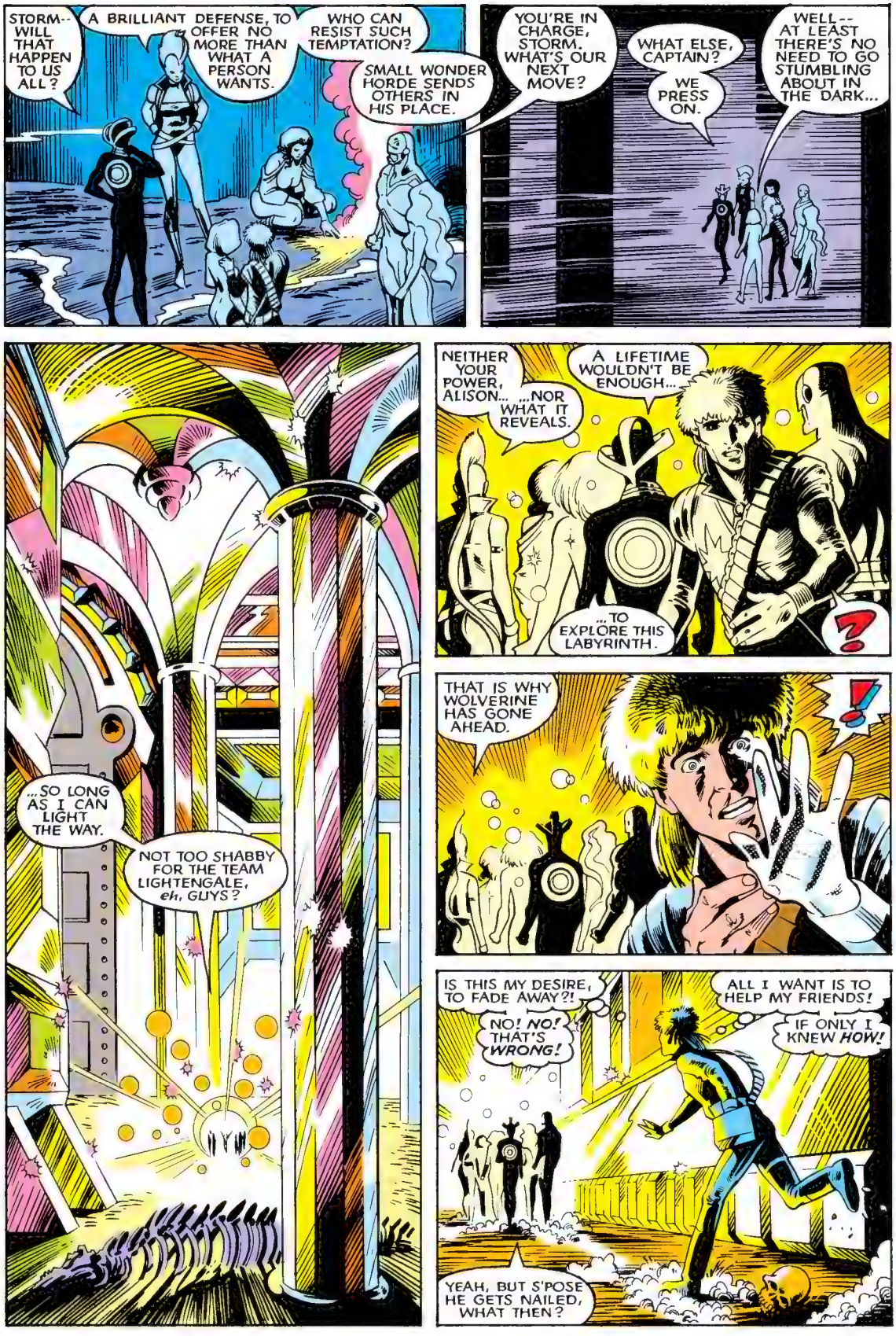
BIG FLAMIN' SURPRISE.
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
FOLLOW MY ROAD, DARLIN'...

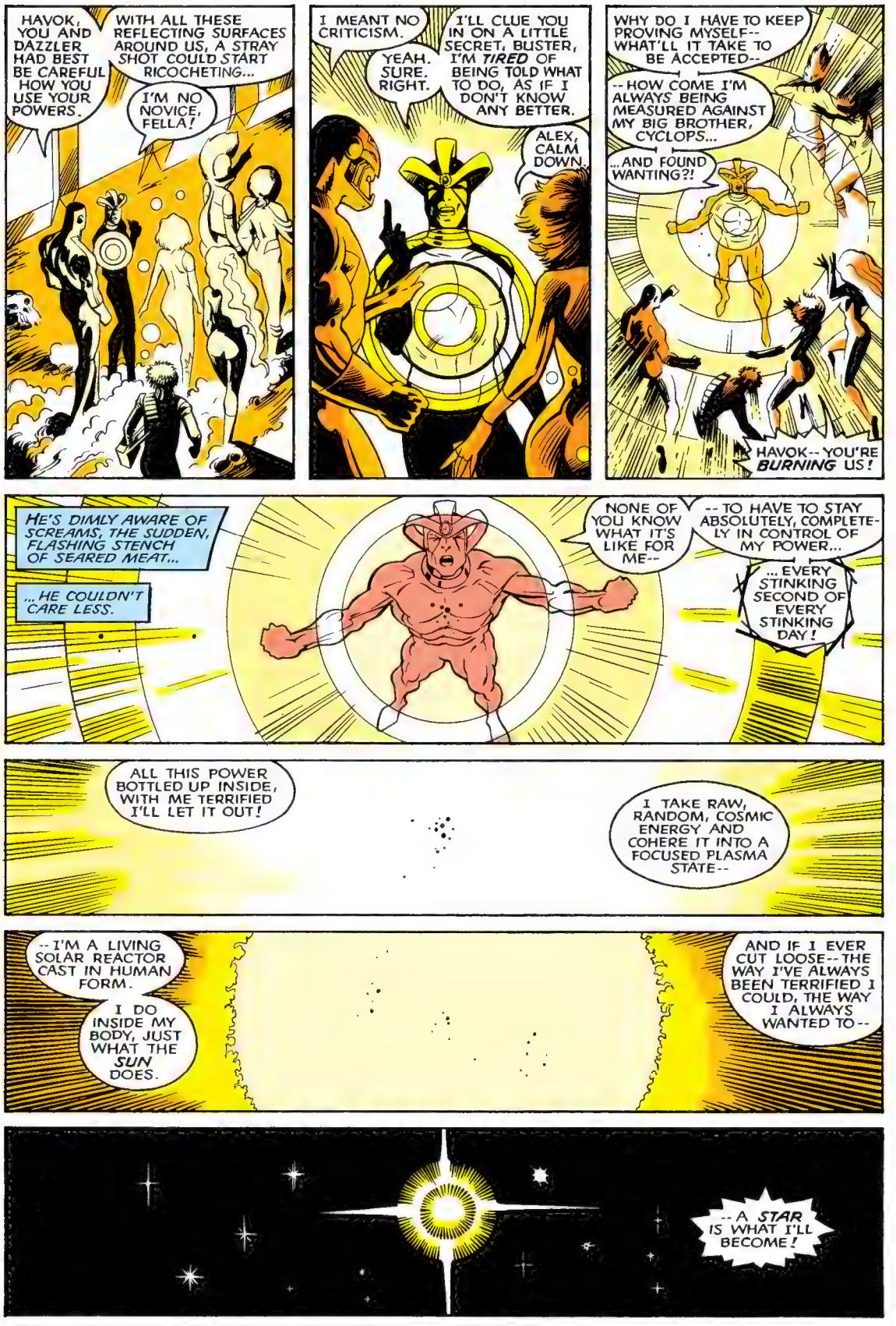
...AN' I'LL SHOW YOU.
PSYLOCKE, ESTABLISH A MIND-LINK BETWEEN US, SO WE CAN KEEP IN TOUCH.
DONE, WOLVERINE.
STORM, AFTER THE MESS WOLVIE MADE AT THE MANSION...
...YOU SURE HE'S THE RIGHT ONE TO ACT AS SCOUT?

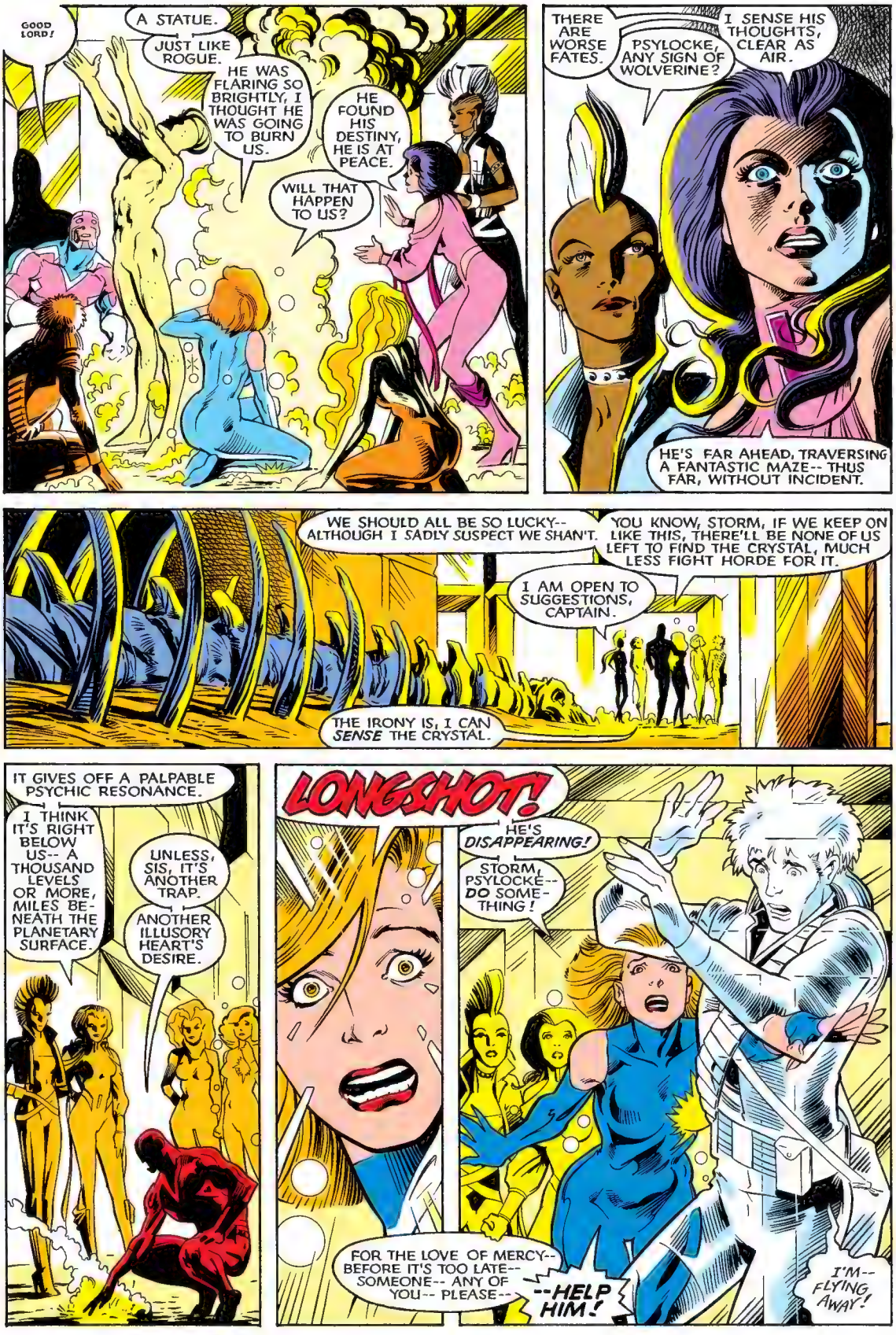
FLAWED OR NOT, ROGUE, WE HAVE NONE TO DEPEND ON BUT OURSELVES.
WE MUST MAKE THE BEST OF THAT.
WISH AH HAD YOUR FAITH--
--WHAT THE HECK?!

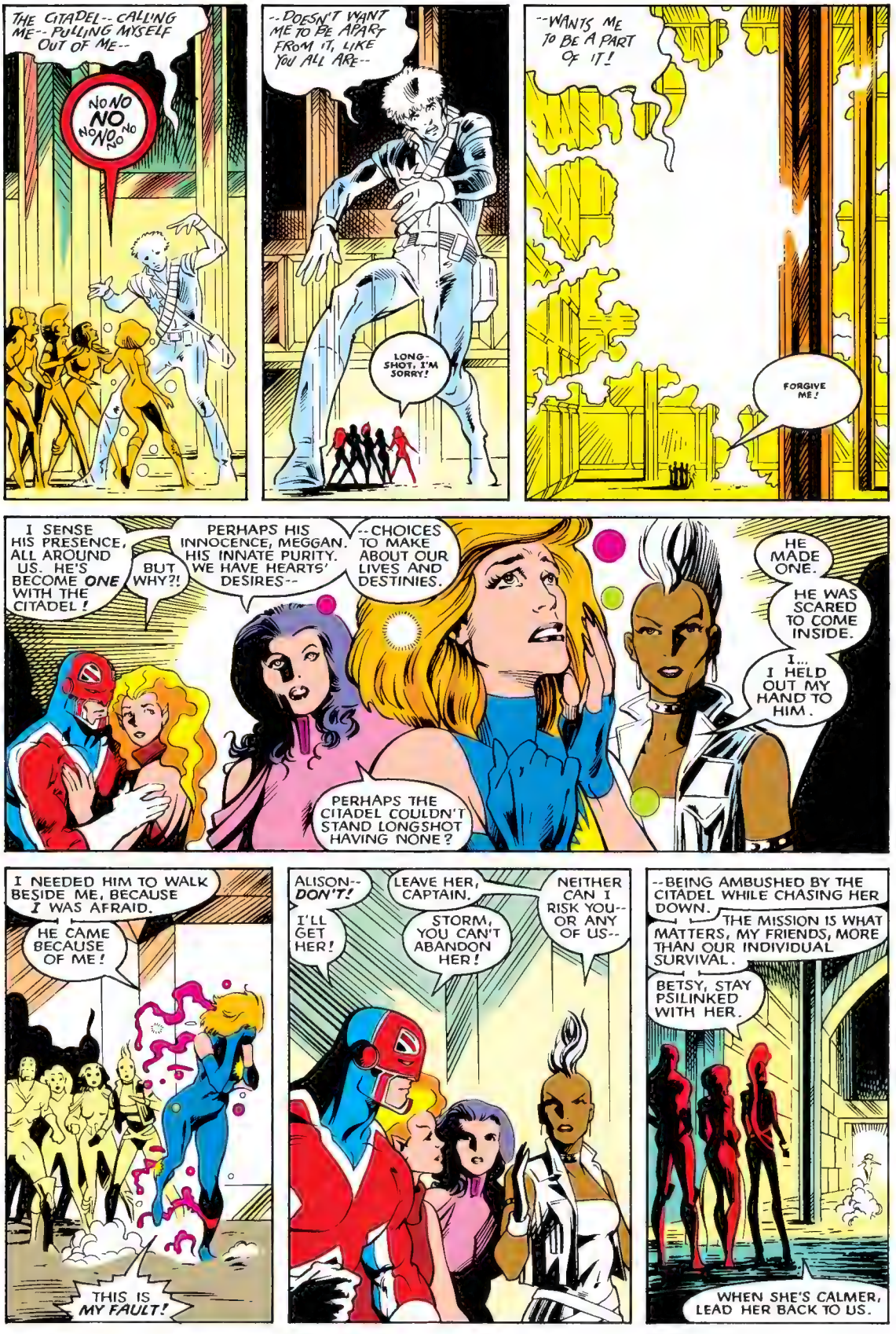

ROGUE--
--WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
AH'M DREAMIN'!
OR AH'VE LOST MY MARBLES--
--'CAUSE THIS IS TOO FANTASTIC TO BE BELIEVED.
THE OLD SOUTH--
--AS IT WAS IN SONG AN' STORY--
--ALMOST AS MUCH A FAIRY TALE LAND AS "CAMELOT."
COMPLETE WITH A PLANTATION PRINCESS:
...ME!
BELLE OF THE BALL, WITH THE HANDSOMEST OF GENTRY HER BEAUS.
LAUGHIN', LOVIN'-- HAPPY IN A WAY AH'VE NEVER BEEN.
...AH COULD NEVER BE.
GLORY, SHE CAN SEE ME!
THE LOOK IN HER EYES--
--oh LORD, DO AH REALLY APPEAR SO SAD AN' LONELY TO HER?
SHE HAS A HOME, FAMILY-- LOVE-- EVERYTHING AH'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF.
IT ISN'T FAIR, WHY CAN'T THOSE GIFTS BE MINE?!

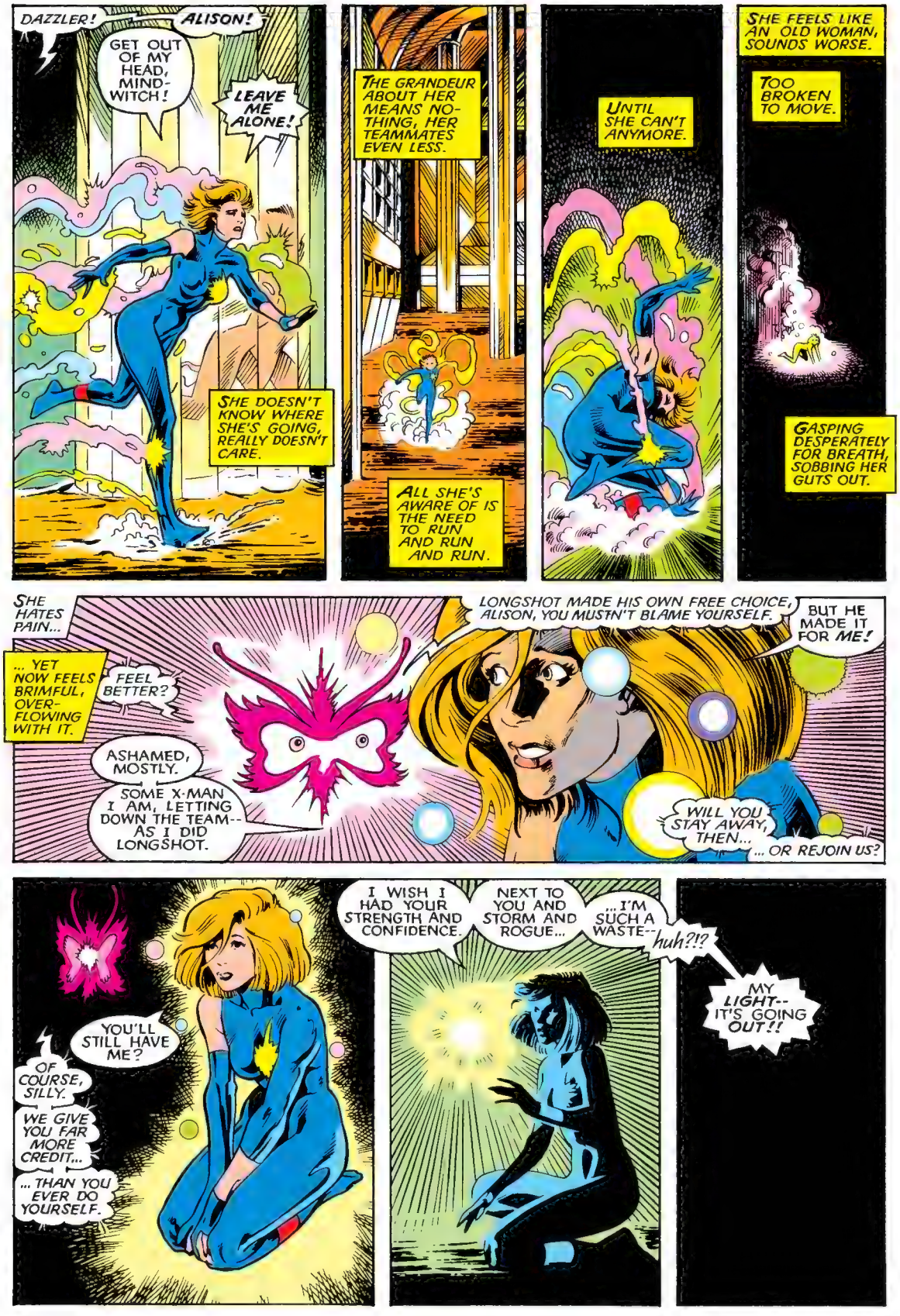
THEY CAN BE.
ALL YOU NEED DO...
... IS JOIN WITH THE DREAM...
... AND MAKE IT YOUR REALITY!
ROGUE!
ANSWER ME, GIRL!
SHE CAN'T, STORM.
SHE'S BEYOND ALL HEARING.
OF YOU ALL, SAVE LONGSHOT, ROGUE'S IS THE MOST DIFFICULT MIND FOR ME TO READ, SO I ONLY PERCEIVED FLASHES OF WHAT OCCURRED.
EVIDENTLY, SHE WAS OFFERED HER HEART'S DESIRE, THE FULFILLMENT OF HER MOST FUNDAMENTAL HOPES AND YEARNINGS...
... AND SHE ACCEPTED.
SHE IS ONE WITH HER DREAMS.
SHE HAS NO MORE NEED FOR OUR REALITY.
AND LESS PLACE IN IT.


STORM-- WILL THAT HAPPEN TO US ALL?
A BRILLIANT DEFENSE, TO OFFER NO MORE THAN WHAT A PERSON WANTS.
WHO CAN RESIST SUCH TEMPTATION?
SMALL WONDER HORDE SENDS OTHERS IN HIS PLACE.
YOU'RE IN CHARGE, STORM. WHAT'S OUR NEXT MOVE?
WHAT ELSE, CAPTAIN?
WE PRESS ON.
WELL-- AT LEAST THERE'S NO NEED TO GO STUMBLING ABOUT IN THE DARK...
...SO LONG AS I CAN LIGHT THE WAY.
NOT TOO SHABBY FOR THE TEAM LIGHTENGALE, eh, GUYS?
NEITHER YOUR POWER, ALISON... ...NOR WHAT IT REVEALS.
A LIFETIME WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH...
...TO EXPLORE THIS LABYRINTH.
?
THAT IS WHY WOLVERINE HAS GONE AHEAD.
!
IS THIS MY DESIRE, TO FADE AWAY?!
NO! NO! THAT'S WRONG!
ALL I WANT IS TO HELP MY FRIENDS!
IF ONLY I KNEW HOW!
YEAH, BUT S'POSE HE GETS NAILED, WHAT THEN?

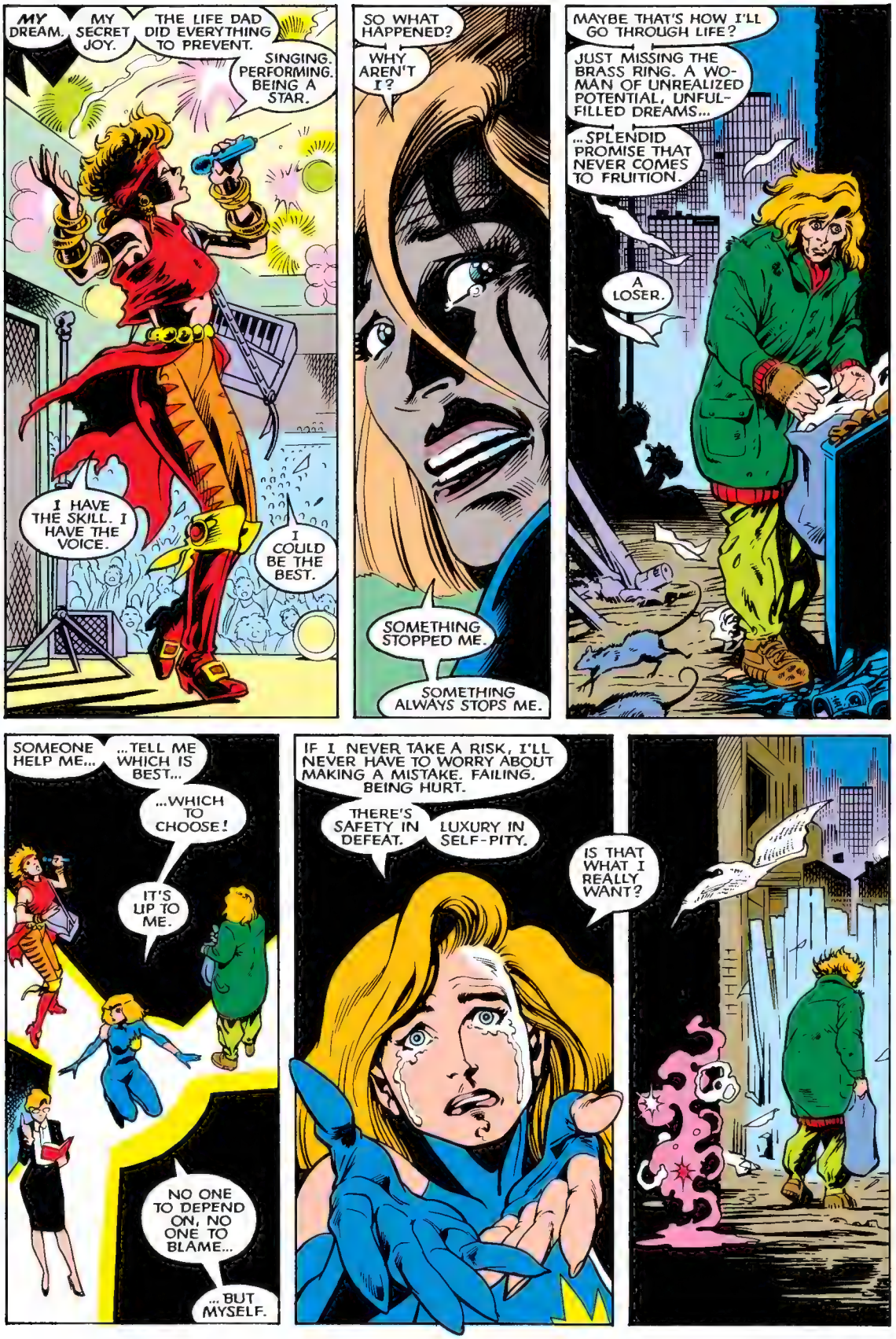

HAVOK, YOU AND DAZZLER HAD BEST BE CAREFUL HOW YOU USE YOUR POWERS.
WITH ALL THESE REFLECTING SURFACES AROUND US, A STRAY SHOT COULD START RICOCHETING...
I'M NO NOVICE, FELLA!
I MEANT NO CRITICISM.
YEAH. SURE. RIGHT.
I'LL CLUE YOU IN ON A LITTLE SECRET, BUSTER, I'M TIRED OF BEING TOLD WHAT TO DO, AS IF I DON'T KNOW ANY BETTER.
ALEX, CALM DOWN.
WHY DO I HAVE TO KEEP PROVING MYSELF-- WHAT'LL IT TAKE TO BE ACCEPTED--
--HOW COME I'M ALWAYS BEING MEASURED AGAINST MY BIG BROTHER, CYCLOPS...
...AND FOUND WANTING?!
HAVOK-- YOU'RE BURNING US!
HE'S DIMLY AWARE OF SCREAMS, THE SUDDEN, FLASHING STENCH OF SEARED MEAT...
...HE COULDN'T CARE LESS.
NONE OF YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE FOR ME--
--TO HAVE TO STAY ABSOLUTELY, COMPLETELY IN CONTROL OF MY POWER...
...EVERY STINKING SECOND OF EVERY STINKING DAY!
ALL THIS POWER BOTTLED UP INSIDE, WITH ME TERRIFIED I'LL LET IT OUT!
I TAKE RAW, RANDOM, COSMIC ENERGY AND COHERE IT INTO A FOCUSED PLASMA STATE--
--I'M A LIVING SOLAR REACTOR CAST IN HUMAN FORM.
I DO INSIDE MY BODY, JUST WHAT THE SUN DOES.
AND IF I EVER CUT LOOSE--THE WAY I'VE ALWAYS BEEN TERRIFIED I COULD, THE WAY I ALWAYS WANTED TO--
--A STAR IS WHAT I'LL BECOME!

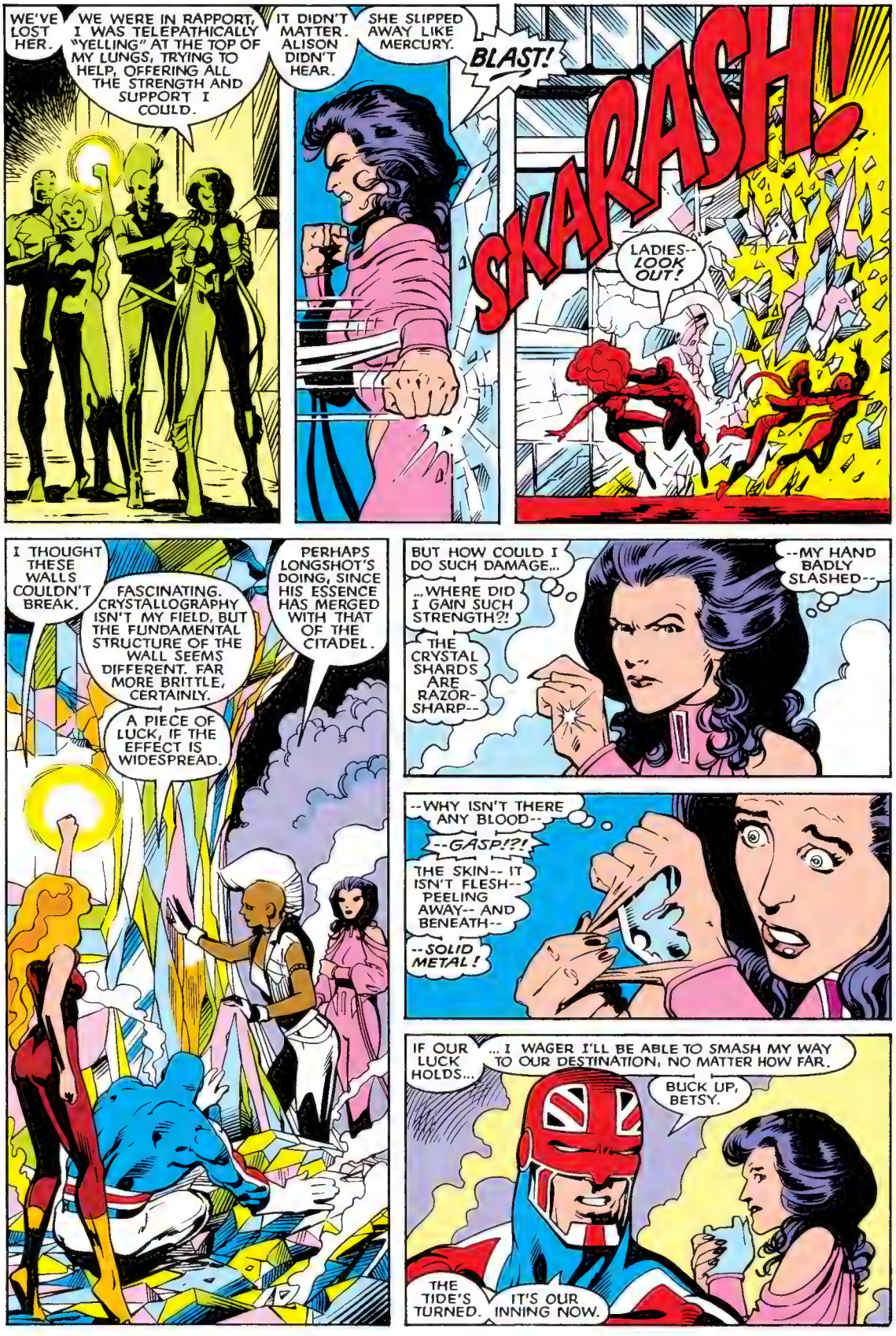

GOOD LORD!
A STATUE.
JUST LIKE ROGUE.
HE WAS FLARING SO BRIGHTLY, I THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO BURN US.
HE FOUND HIS DESTINY, HE IS AT PEACE.
WILL THAT HAPPEN TO US?
THERE ARE WORSE FATES.
PSYLOCKE, ANY SIGN OF WOLVERINE?
I SENSE HIS THOUGHTS, CLEAR AS AIR.
HE'S FAR AHEAD, TRAVERSING A FANTASTIC MAZE-- THUS FAR, WITHOUT INCIDENT.
WE SHOULD ALL BE SO LUCKY-- ALTHOUGH I SADLY SUSPECT WE SHAN'T.
YOU KNOW, STORM, IF WE KEEP ON LIKE THIS, THERE'LL BE NONE OF US LEFT TO FIND THE CRYSTAL, MUCH LESS FIGHT HORDE FOR IT.
I AM OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS, CAPTAIN.
THE IRONY IS, I CAN SENSE THE CRYSTAL.
IT GIVES OFF A PALPABLE PSYCHIC RESONANCE.
I THINK IT'S RIGHT BELOW US-- A THOUSAND LEVELS OR MORE, MILES BENEATH THE PLANETARY SURFACE.
UNLESS, SIS, IT'S ANOTHER TRAP.
ANOTHER ILLUSORY HEART'S DESIRE.
LONGSHOT!
HE'S DISAPPEARING!
STORM, PSYLOCKE-- DO SOMETHING!
FOR THE LOVE OF MERCY-- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE-- SOMEONE-- ANY OF YOU-- PLEASE--
--HELP HIM!
I'M-- FLYING AWAY!

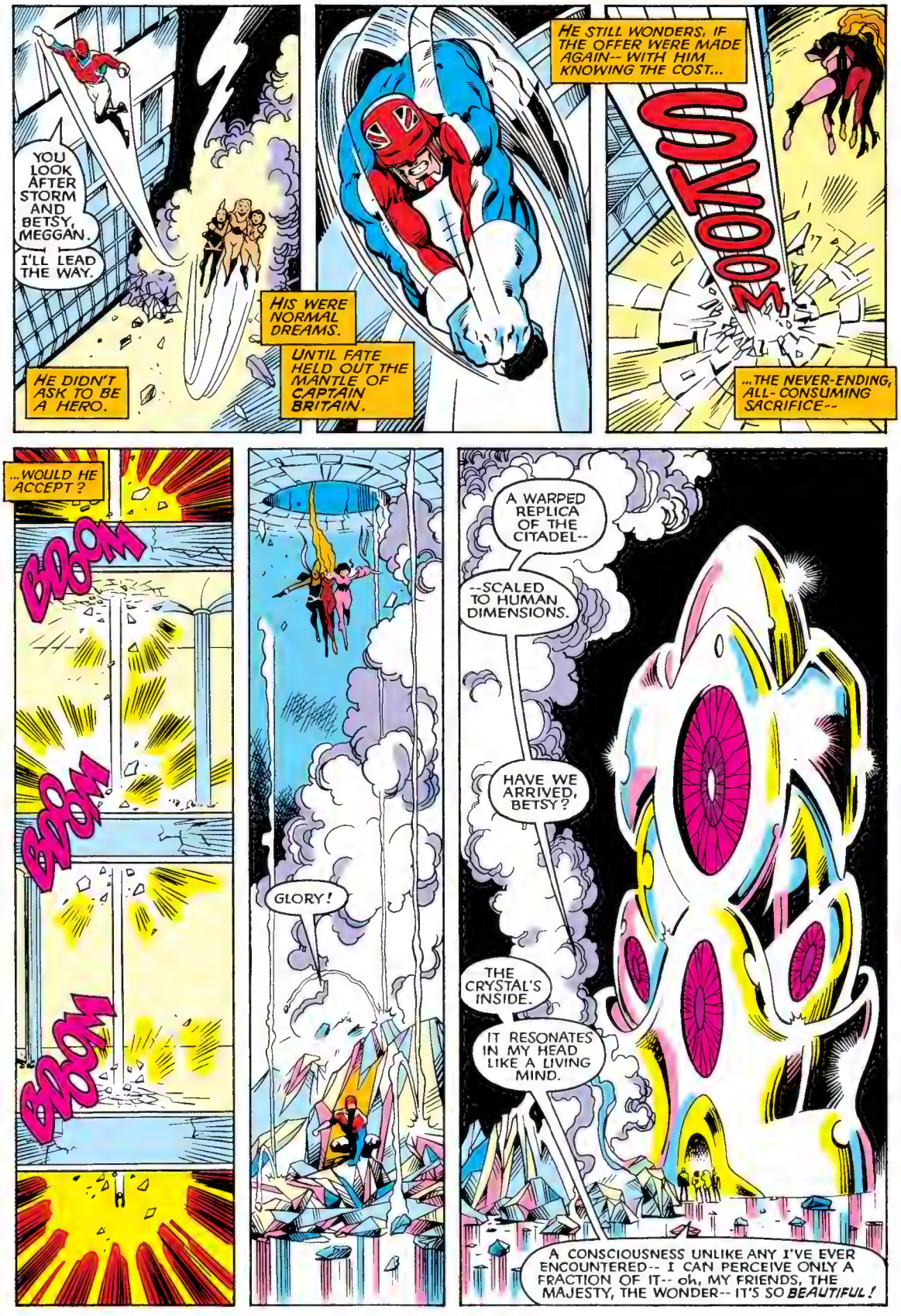

THE CITADEL-- CALLING ME-- PULLING MYSELF OUT OF ME--
NO NO NO NO NO NO NO
--DOESN'T WANT ME TO BE APART FROM IT, LIKE YOU ALL ARE--
LONG-SHOT, I'M SORRY!
--WANTS ME TO BE A PART OF IT!
FORGIVE ME!
I SENSE HIS PRESENCE, ALL AROUND US. HE'S BECOME ONE WITH THE CITADEL!
BUT WHY?!
PERHAPS HIS INNOCENCE, MEGGAN. HIS INNATE PURITY. WE HAVE HEARTS' DESIRES--
--CHOICES TO MAKE ABOUT OUR LIVES AND DESTINIES.
HE MADE ONE.
HE WAS SCARED TO COME INSIDE.
I... I HELD OUT MY HAND TO HIM.
PERHAPS THE CITADEL COULDN'T STAND LONGSHOT HAVING NONE?
I NEEDED HIM TO WALK BESIDE ME, BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID.
HE CAME BECAUSE OF ME!
THIS IS MY FAULT!
ALISON-- DON'T!
I'LL GET HER!
LEAVE HER, CAPTAIN.
STORM, YOU CAN'T ABANDON HER!
NEITHER CAN I RISK YOU-- OR ANY OF US--
--BEING AMBUSHED BY THE CITADEL WHILE CHASING HER DOWN.
THE MISSION IS WHAT MATTERS, MY FRIENDS, MORE THAN OUR INDIVIDUAL SURVIVAL.
BETSY, STAY PSILINKED WITH HER.
WHEN SHE'S CALMER, LEAD HER BACK TO US.

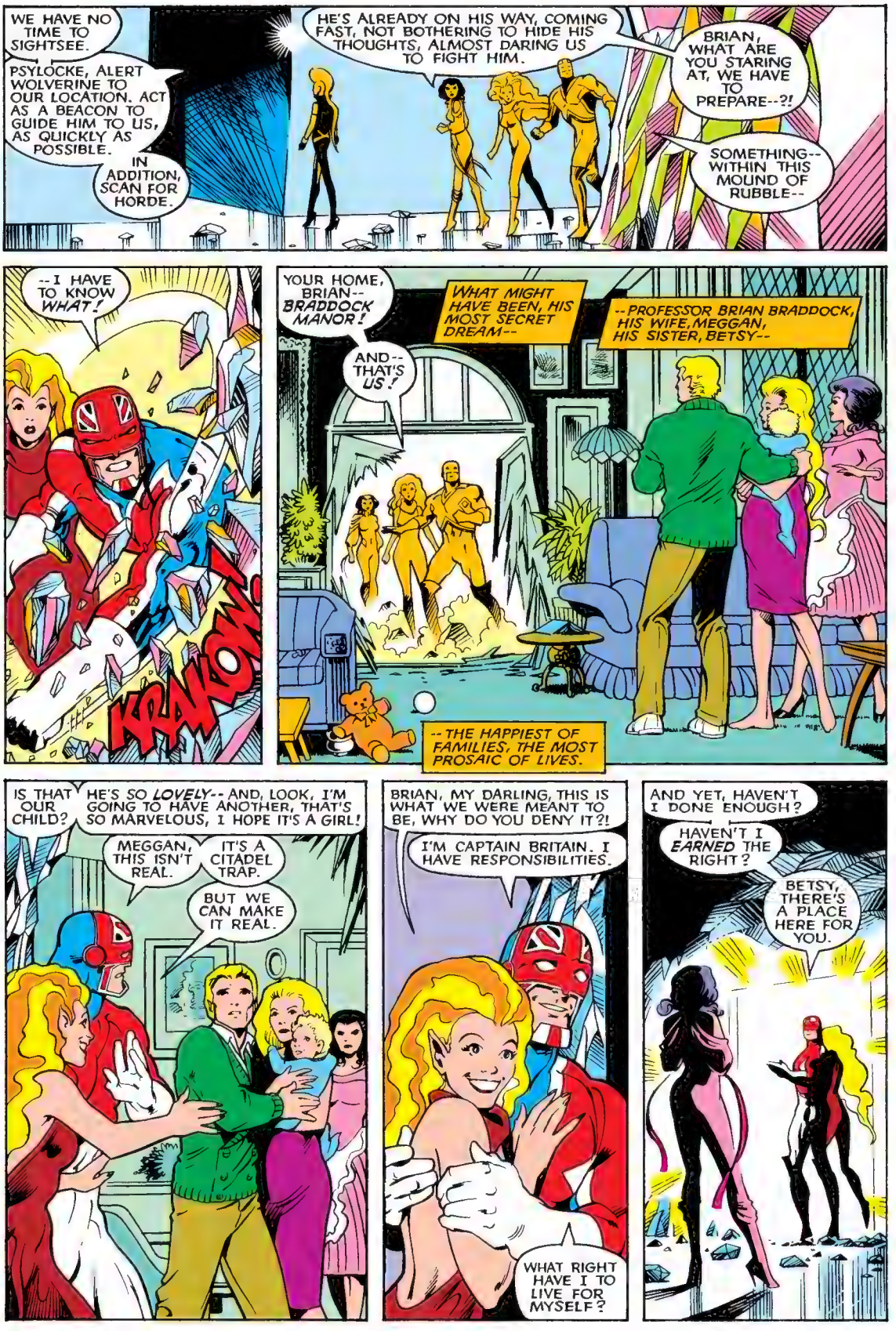

DAZZLER!
ALISON!
GET OUT OF MY HEAD, MIND-WITCH!
LEAVE ME ALONE!
SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHERE SHE'S GOING, REALLY DOESN'T CARE.
THE GRANDEUR ABOUT HER MEANS NO-THING, HER TEAMMATES EVEN LESS.
ALL SHE'S AWARE OF IS THE NEED TO RUN AND RUN AND RUN.
UNTIL SHE CAN'T ANYMORE.
SHE FEELS LIKE AN OLD WOMAN, SOUNDS WORSE.
TOO BROKEN TO MOVE.
GASPING DESPERATELY FOR BREATH, SOBBING HER GUTS OUT.
SHE HATES PAIN...
... YET NOW FEELS BRIMFUL, OVER-FLOWING WITH IT.
FEEL BETTER?
ASHAMED, MOSTLY.
SOME X-MAN I AM, LETTING DOWN THE TEAM-- AS I DID LONGSHOT.
LONGSHOT MADE HIS OWN FREE CHOICE, ALISON, YOU MUSTN'T BLAME YOURSELF.
BUT HE MADE IT FOR ME!
WILL YOU STAY AWAY, THEN...
... OR REJOIN US?
YOU'LL STILL HAVE ME?
OF COURSE, SILLY.
WE GIVE YOU FAR MORE CREDIT...
... THAN YOU EVER DO YOURSELF.
I WISH I HAD YOUR STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE.
NEXT TO YOU AND STORM AND ROGUE...
...I'M SUCH A WASTE--
huh?!?
MY LIGHT-- IT'S GOING OUT!!

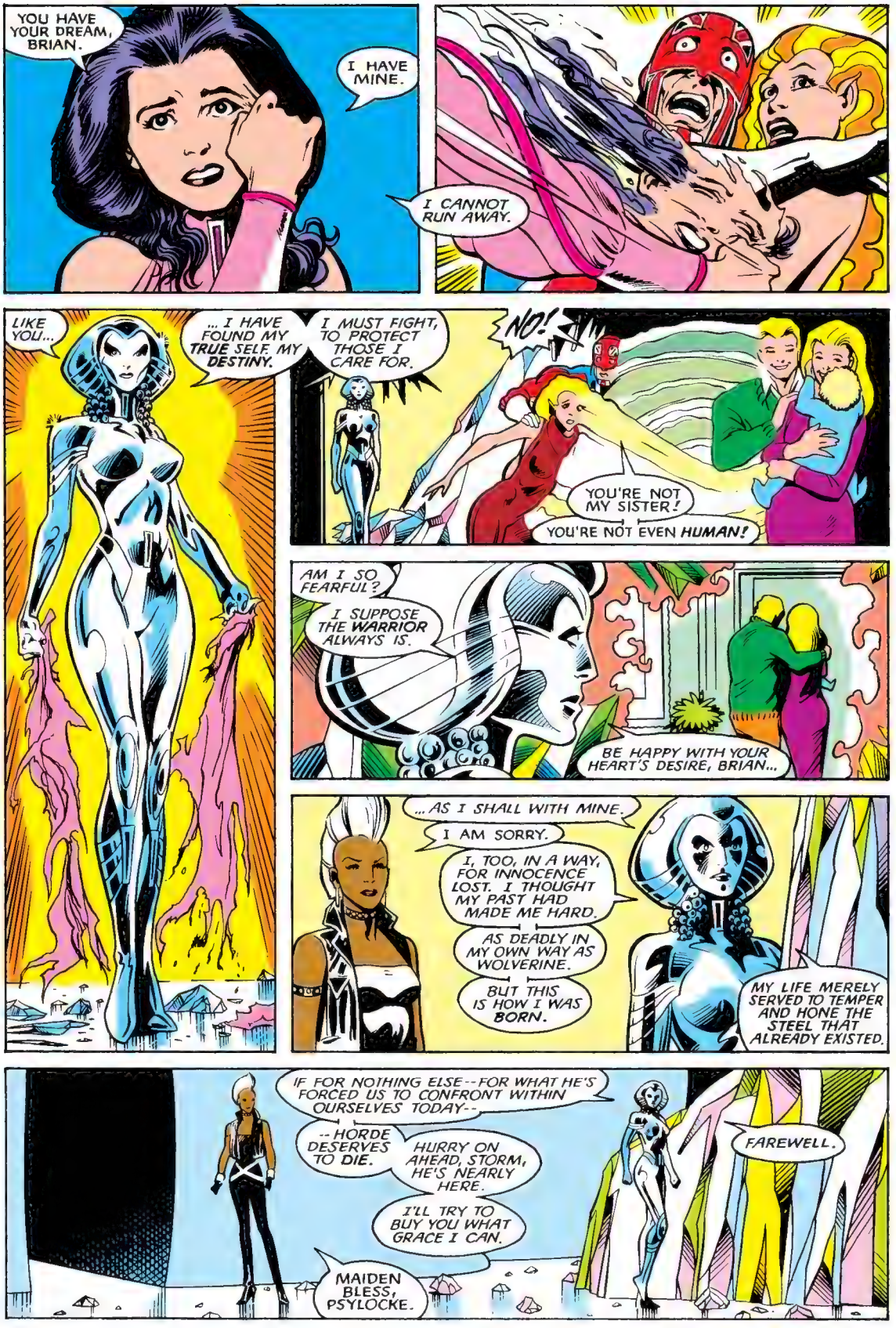
NO PROB, NOT REALLY, DON'T PANIC--
--EVEN IN PITCH DARKNESS, SO SCARY, BOOGEY-MONSTERS WAITING TO JUMP ME, PSYLOCKE CAN LEAD ME, THE SOUND OF THE OTHERS' VOICES RECHARGE ME-- WHAT'S THAT?!
OH! THAT'S-- ME!
Mr. WILSON FISK, YOU CLAIM TO BE A HUMBLE IMPORTER OF SPICES.
ARE YOU NOT, IN FACT, THE ABSOLUTE MONARCH OF THE NORTH AMERICAN UNDER-WORLD--
--THE INFAMOUS KINGPIN OF CRIME?!
AS UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK...
...I COULDN'T BE MORE PLEASED WITH THE KINGPIN'S CONVICTION AND LIFE SENTENCE.
WE'VE BROKEN THE BACK OF THE MOST VICIOUS AND POWERFUL MOB IN THE COUNTRY.
AS CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES...
...THE FIRST WOMAN TO HOLD THAT HIGH OFFICE...
...IT IS MY GREAT PRIVILEGE--AND DISTINCT PLEASURE--
--TO CALL THIS SESSION OF THE SUPREME COURT TO ORDER.
THAT COULD HAVE BEEN MY LIFE, MY FUTURE, IF I'D DONE AS DAD WANTED...
... FOLLOWED IN HIS FOOTSTEPS...
... GONE TO LAW SCHOOL.
HE LOVED THE LAW--
--I THINK MORE, SOMETIMES, THAN ME--
--WHY COULDN'T I?
?!?


MY DREAM.
MY SECRET JOY.
THE LIFE DAD DID EVERYTHING TO PREVENT.
SINGING. PERFORMING. BEING A STAR.
I HAVE THE SKILL. I HAVE THE VOICE.
I COULD BE THE BEST.
SO WHAT HAPPENED?
WHY AREN'T I?
SOMETHING STOPPED ME.
SOMETHING ALWAYS STOPS ME.
MAYBE THAT'S HOW I'LL GO THROUGH LIFE?
JUST MISSING THE BRASS RING. A WOMAN OF UNREALIZED POTENTIAL, UNFULFILLED DREAMS...
...SPLENDID PROMISE THAT NEVER COMES TO FRUITION.
A LOSER.
SOMEONE HELP ME...
...TELL ME WHICH IS BEST...
...WHICH TO CHOOSE!
IT'S UP TO ME.
NO ONE TO DEPEND ON, NO ONE TO BLAME...
...BUT MYSELF.
IF I NEVER TAKE A RISK, I'LL NEVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT MAKING A MISTAKE. FAILING. BEING HURT.
THERE'S SAFETY IN DEFEAT.
LUXURY IN SELF-PITY.
IS THAT WHAT I REALLY WANT?


WE'VE LOST HER.
WE WERE IN RAPPORT, I WAS TELEPATHICALLY "YELLING" AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS, TRYING TO HELP, OFFERING ALL THE STRENGTH AND SUPPORT I COULD.
IT DIDN'T MATTER. ALISON DIDN'T HEAR.
SHE SLIPPED AWAY LIKE MERCURY.
BLAST!
SKARASH!
LADIES-- LOOK OUT!
I THOUGHT THESE WALLS COULDN'T BREAK.
FASCINATING. CRYSTALLOGRAPHY ISN'T MY FIELD, BUT THE FUNDAMENTAL STRUCTURE OF THE WALL SEEMS DIFFERENT. FAR MORE BRITTLE, CERTAINLY.
PERHAPS LONGSHOT'S DOING, SINCE HIS ESSENCE HAS MERGED WITH THAT OF THE CITADEL.
A PIECE OF LUCK, IF THE EFFECT IS WIDESPREAD.
BUT HOW COULD I DO SUCH DAMAGE...
...WHERE DID I GAIN SUCH STRENGTH?!
THE CRYSTAL SHARDS ARE RAZOR-SHARP--
--MY HAND BADLY SLASHED--
--WHY ISN'T THERE ANY BLOOD--
--GASP!?!
THE SKIN-- IT ISN'T FLESH-- PEELING AWAY-- AND BENEATH--
--SOLID METAL!
IF OUR LUCK HOLDS...
...I WAGER I'LL BE ABLE TO SMASH MY WAY TO OUR DESTINATION, NO MATTER HOW FAR.
BUCK UP, BETSY.
THE TIDE'S TURNED.
IT'S OUR INNING NOW.

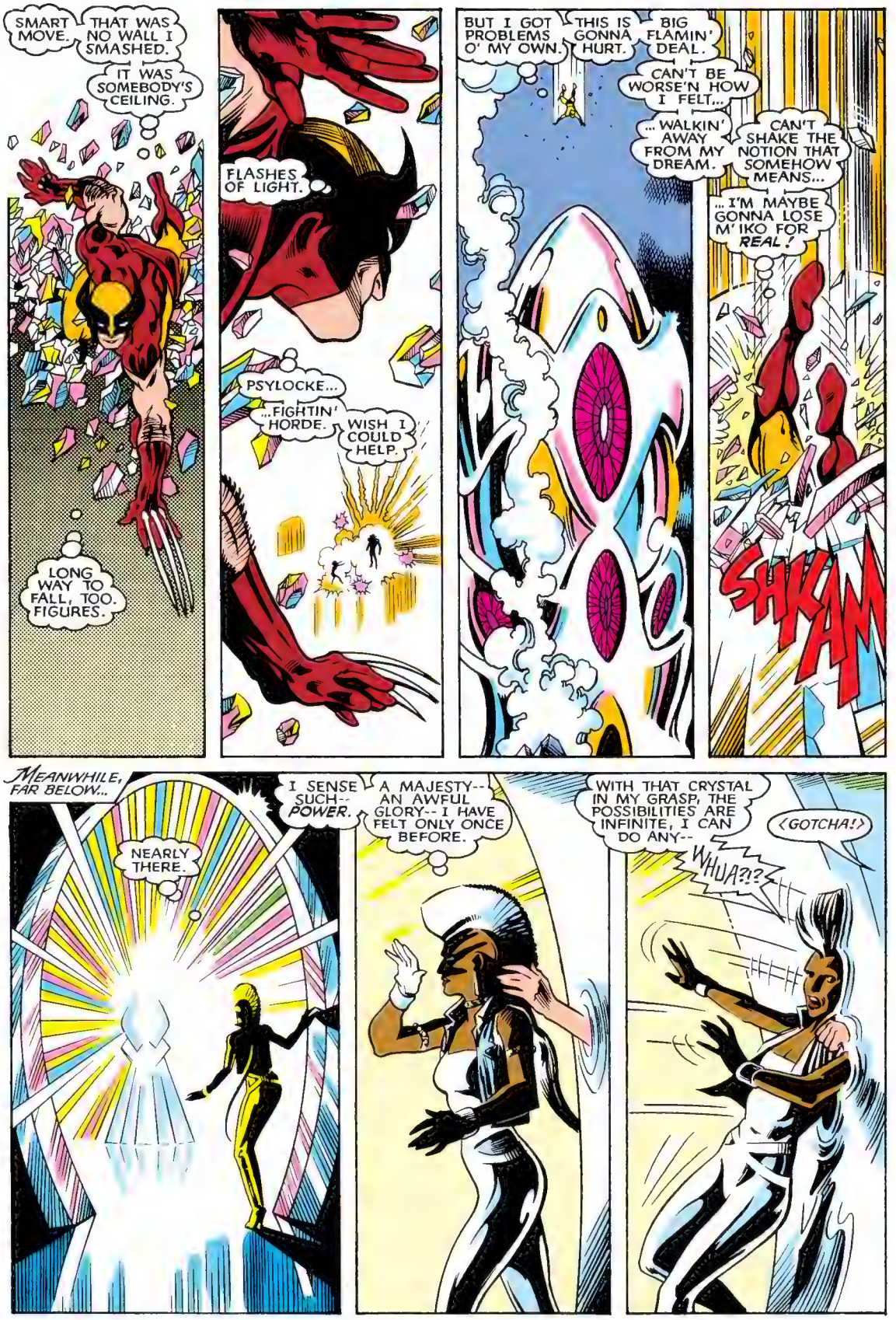

YOU LOOK AFTER STORM AND BETSY, MEGGAN.
I'LL LEAD THE WAY.
HE DIDN'T ASK TO BE A HERO.
HIS WERE NORMAL DREAMS.
UNTIL FATE HELD OUT THE MANTLE OF CAPTAIN BRITAIN.
HE STILL WONDERS, IF THE OFFER WERE MADE AGAIN-- WITH HIM KNOWING THE COST...
BOOM
...THE NEVER-ENDING, ALL-CONSUMING SACRIFICE--
...WOULD HE ACCEPT?
BLOOM
BLOOM
BLOOM
GLORY!
A WARPED REPLICA OF THE CITADEL--
--SCALED TO HUMAN DIMENSIONS.
HAVE WE ARRIVED, BETSY?
THE CRYSTAL'S INSIDE.
IT RESONATES IN MY HEAD LIKE A LIVING MIND.
A CONSCIOUSNESS UNLIKE ANY I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED-- I CAN PERCEIVE ONLY A FRACTION OF IT-- oh, MY FRIENDS, THE MAJESTY, THE WONDER-- IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL!


WE HAVE NO TIME TO SIGHTSEE.
PSYLOCKE, ALERT WOLVERINE TO OUR LOCATION. ACT AS A BEACON TO GUIDE HIM TO US, AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
IN ADDITION, SCAN FOR HORDE.
HE'S ALREADY ON HIS WAY, COMING FAST, NOT BOTHERING TO HIDE HIS THOUGHTS, ALMOST DARING US TO FIGHT HIM.
BRIAN, WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT, WE HAVE TO PREPARE--?!
SOMETHING--WITHIN THIS MOUND OF RUBBLE--
--I HAVE TO KNOW WHAT!
KRAKOW!
YOUR HOME, BRIAN--BRADDOCK MANOR!
AND--THAT'S US!
WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN, HIS MOST SECRET DREAM--
--PROFESSOR BRIAN BRADDOCK, HIS WIFE, MEGGAN, HIS SISTER, BETSY--
--THE HAPPIEST OF FAMILIES, THE MOST PROSAIC OF LIVES.
IS THAT OUR CHILD?
HE'S SO LOVELY--AND, LOOK, I'M GOING TO HAVE ANOTHER, THAT'S SO MARVELOUS, I HOPE IT'S A GIRL!
MEGGAN, THIS ISN'T REAL.
IT'S A CITADEL TRAP.
BUT WE CAN MAKE IT REAL.
BRIAN, MY DARLING, THIS IS WHAT WE WERE MEANT TO BE, WHY DO YOU DENY IT?!
I'M CAPTAIN BRITAIN. I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES.
WHAT RIGHT HAVE I TO LIVE FOR MYSELF?
AND YET, HAVEN'T I DONE ENOUGH?
HAVEN'T I EARNED THE RIGHT?
BETSY, THERE'S A PLACE HERE FOR YOU.


YOU HAVE YOUR DREAM, BRIAN.
I HAVE MINE.
I CANNOT RUN AWAY.
LIKE YOU...
... I HAVE FOUND MY TRUE SELF. MY DESTINY.
I MUST FIGHT, TO PROTECT THOSE I CARE FOR.
NO!
YOU'RE NOT MY SISTER!
YOU'RE NOT EVEN HUMAN!
AM I SO FEARFUL?
I SUPPOSE THE WARRIOR ALWAYS IS.
BE HAPPY WITH YOUR HEART'S DESIRE, BRIAN...
... AS I SHALL WITH MINE.
I AM SORRY.
I, TOO, IN A WAY, FOR INNOCENCE LOST. I THOUGHT MY PAST HAD MADE ME HARD.
AS DEADLY IN MY OWN WAY AS WOLVERINE.
BUT THIS IS HOW I WAS BORN.
MY LIFE MERELY SERVED TO TEMPER AND HONE THE STEEL THAT ALREADY EXISTED.
IF FOR NOTHING ELSE--FOR WHAT HE'S FORCED US TO CONFRONT WITHIN OURSELVES TODAY--
--HORDE DESERVES TO DIE.
HURRY ON AHEAD, STORM, HE'S NEARLY HERE.
I'LL TRY TO BUY YOU WHAT GRACE I CAN.
MAIDEN BLESS, PSYLOCKE.
FAREWELL.

ELSEWHERE...
OTHERS'RE DOIN' THEIR SHARE--
--WHILE I'M TURNIN' OUT TO BE AS MUCH USE HERE AS I WAS AT THE MANSION AGAINST HORDE.
SOME WARRIOR. SOME FLAMIN' WOLVERINE.
PLACE IS CUTTIN' US DOWN TO SIZE.
WONDER WHEN IT'LL BE MY...
...LORD! JAPAN.
CAN'T BE. LIE. FANTASY. ILLUSION.
YET EVERY SENSE TELLS ME THIS IS REAL!
I CAN SMELL THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS--AN' THAT'S THE AMIDA BUDDHA, OUT BACK OF THE YASHIDA ANCESTRAL CASTLE.
AN' WAITIN' THERE FOR ME--
<--MARIKO.>*
THOSE EYES, TO DIE FOR.
YOU'RE EVERYTHING I'M NOT--SOFT WHERE I'M HARD, GENTLE WHERE I'M ROUGH, A WOMAN OF BREEDING AN' CULTURE.
I'M A BACKWOODS BRAWLER, DARLIN', WHAT THE BLAZES DO YOU SEE IN ME?
<DOES THE OUTWARD, FLESHLY CASEMENT MATTER, MY LOVE...>
<...WHEN THE HEART IS NOBLE?>
*TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE. --Ann.
THIS NEVER HAPPENED.
YOU CALLED OUR WEDDING OFF.
<ANOTHER TIME.>
<A SECOND CHANCE.>
<WILL YOU CAST IT TO THE WINDS?>
I SHOULD.
MY FRIENDS--THE X-MEN--THEY NEED--I NEED...
<I CANNOT.>
<THAT'S THE SPIRIT, LOVER!>
?!?!

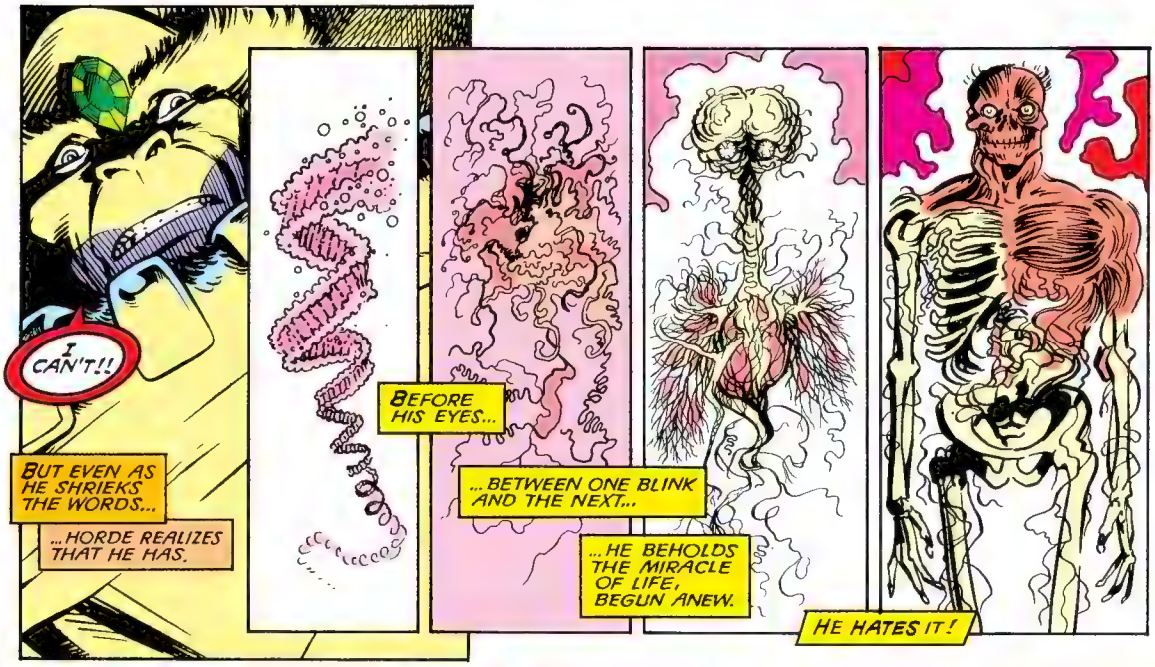
MARIKO--WHAT THE DEVIL'S HAPPENING?!
〈ONLY WHAT YOU'D EXPECT, SWEETS...〉
〈...ON OUR WEDDING NIGHT!〉
AS REAL AS THE GARDEN-- SIGHT, SOUND, SMELL--
--MY KIND'A PLACE, MY KIND'A CROWD--
--BUT M'IKO WAS NEVER A PART OF THIS LIFE.
SHE DOESN'T BELONG.
〈I BELONG WITH YOU, LOGAN.〉
〈A WILD WOMAN...〉
〈... FOR MY WILD MAN.〉
〈IS THAT TOO MUCH...〉
〈... FOR YOU TO HANDLE?〉
SNIKT
I WANT YOU.
SO MUCH IT HURTS.
MORE'N ANYTHING I'VE EVER FELT.
BUT NOT LIKE THIS!


SMART MOVE.
THAT WAS NO WALL I SMASHED.
IT WAS SOMEBODY'S CEILING.
LONG WAY TO FALL, TOO. FIGURES.
FLASHES OF LIGHT.
PSYLOCKE...
...FIGHTIN' HORDE.
WISH I COULD HELP.
BUT I GOT PROBLEMS O' MY OWN.
THIS IS GONNA HURT.
BIG FLAMIN' DEAL.
CAN'T BE WORSE'N HOW I FELT...
...WALKIN' AWAY FROM MY DREAM.
CAN'T SHAKE THE NOTION THAT SOMEHOW MEANS...
...I'M MAYBE GONNA LOSE M'IKO FOR REAL!
SHKAM
MEANWHILE, FAR BELOW...
NEARLY THERE.
I SENSE SUCH-- POWER.
A MAJESTY-- AN AWFUL GLORY-- I HAVE FELT ONLY ONCE BEFORE.
WITH THAT CRYSTAL IN MY GRASP, THE POSSIBILITIES ARE INFINITE, I CAN DO ANY--
WHUA?!?
<GOTCHA!>

TOKYŌ--
--A REALITY SO WILD IT BEGGARS THE IMAGINATION...
...TOO FANTASTIC TO BE BELIEVED...
...SO MUCH LIKE THE WOMAN WHO INTRODUCED STORM TO IT.
YŪKIŌ!
〈LOOKING GOOD, ORORO.〉
〈BUT TO DANCE WITH ME, YOU HAVE TO LOOK BETTER!〉
?
〈THAT'S MORE LIKE IT.〉
〈WHAT'RE YOU WAITING FOR?!〉
〈THE FUN WE HAD LAST TIME*...〉
〈...WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO WHAT AWAITS US NOW!〉
*IN X-MEN #'S 172 & 173-- A.
TO BE A THIEF AGAIN--TO DANCE ALWAYS ON THE EDGE OF OBLIVION, WITH NONE TO CARE FOR BUT OURSELVES, LIVING FROM MOMENT TO MOMENT, ENJOYING EACH TO THE FULLEST.
I NEVER KNEW TRULY HOW TO LAUGH BEFORE I MET YUKIO.
IN MANY WAYS, I HAVE NEVER BEEN AS HAPPY SINCE.
I WANT TO JOIN HER.
BUT THIS IS THE WRONG PLACE, THE WRONG TIME, THE WRONG WAY.
I LEAD THE X-MEN.
THAT RESPONSIBILITY...
...I CANNOT ABANDON.
MY CLOTHES--THEY ARE UNCHANGED!
IS YŪKIŌ'S HOLD ON ME SO STRONG--BRIGHT, BLESSED LADY!?!
WOLVERINE!?!
SKRUMP

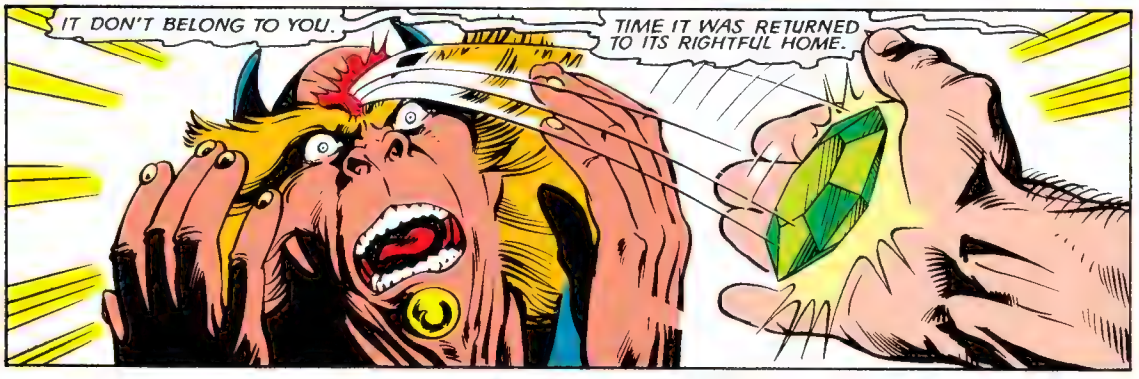
ARE YOU--?!
BANGED UP, NOT BROKE.
WHAT'S WITH THE NEW OUTFIT?
THE CITADEL--A TRAP.
IT WAS THE CLOSEST OF CALLS, MY FRIEND.
I DOUBT I WOULD HAVE THE STRENGTH TO ESCAPE A SECOND TIME.
YEAH-- I KNOW THE FEELING.
THAT THE CRYSTAL?
WE MUST REACH IT...
...BEFORE--?!!
KTONK!
PSYLOCKE'S EFFORT...
... WAS ALMOST AS GREAT...
...AS IT WAS FUTILE.
YOU TWO CARE TO TRY?
OUTTAHERE, DARLIN'!
WOLVERINE--
NO!
FOR A SPLIT-SECOND, SHE TRIES TO RESIST...
...BUT THE TUG ON HER HEART-STRINGS IS TOO STRONG.
THE DREAM TOO WELCOME.
HATED TO DO THAT.
BETTER THIS WAY. WHATEVER HAPPENS, SHE'LL SURVIVE. SHE'LL BE SAFE AN' HAPPY.
I SHOULD BE SO LUCKY.
BUT OF ALL THE TEAM...
... MY ADAMANTIUM BONES...
... AN' HEALING FACTOR...
...GIVE ME THE BEST CHANCE--
GNUNGH!

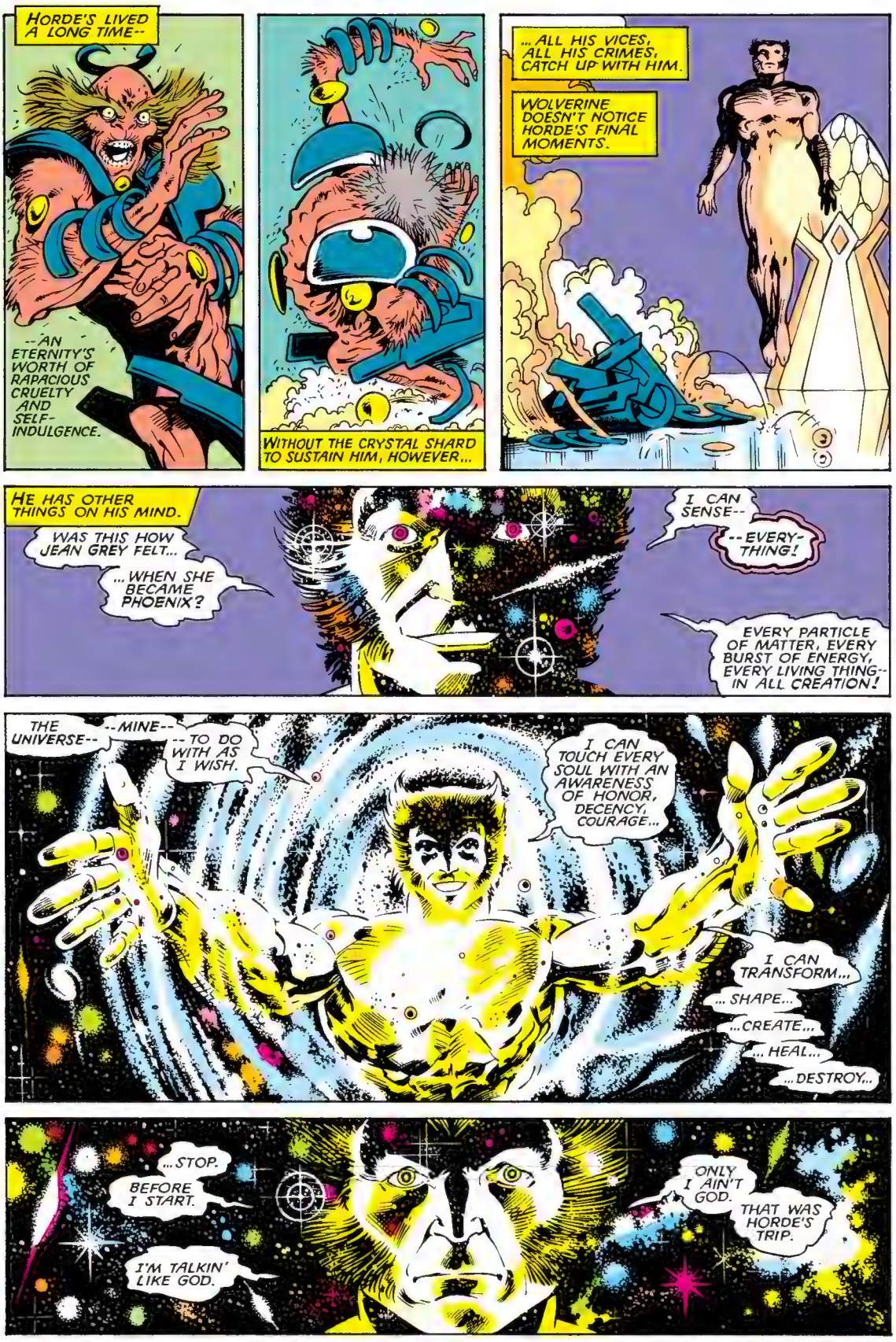
NICE TRY, LITTLE MAN.
STILL STRUGGLING, TOO.
I LIKE THAT.
YOU HAVE A NOBLE, COURAGEOUS HEART, WOLVERINE.
I'LL KEEP IT AS A TROPHY!
BUT AS HORDE TEARS FREE HIS GRISLY PRIZE...
THAT DROP OF HIS BLOOD--
-NO!
PLINK!
NO!
I'VE COME SO FAR, WORKED SO HARD--
--I EARNED THE PRIZE, IT'S MINE BY RIGHT--
--I CAN'T FAIL NOW!

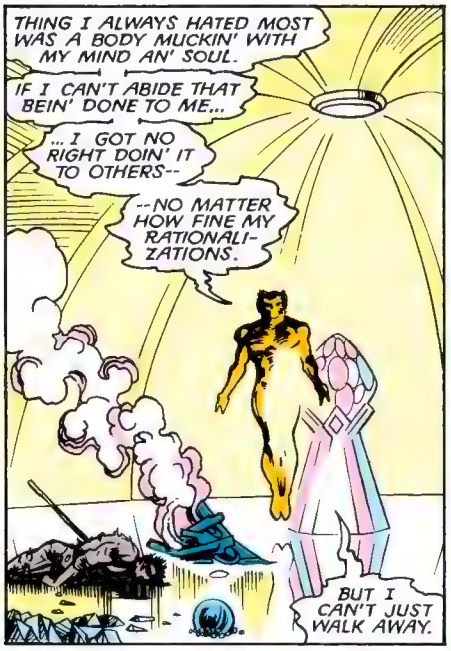

I CAN'T!!
BUT EVEN AS HE SHRIEKS THE WORDS...
...HORDE REALIZES THAT HE HAS.
BEFORE HIS EYES...
...BETWEEN ONE BLINK AND THE NEXT...
...HE BEHOLDS THE MIRACLE OF LIFE, BEGUN ANEW.
HE HATES IT!

HOW?! THIS ISN'T POSSIBLE -- YOU WERE DEAD -- I KILLED YOU!
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.
BUT MY HEALING FACTOR'S IN EVERY CELL OF MY BODY.
SO, I GUESS, IS MY WILL TO LIVE.

GIVEN SUFFICIENT POWER, MY ENTIRE BODY COULD BE REGENERATED FROM THE GENETIC DATA ENCODED IN A SINGLE CELL. OR DROP OF BLOOD.
LOOKS LIKE THE CRYSTAL HAD THE POWER -- TO RESTORE BODY AND MIND BOTH.
THAT SHARD YOU WEAR, BUB.


IT DON'T BELONG TO YOU.
TIME IT WAS RETURNED TO ITS RIGHTFUL HOME.


HORDE'S LIVED A LONG TIME--
--AN ETERNITY'S WORTH OF RAPACIOUS CRUELTY AND SELF-INDULGENCE.
WITHOUT THE CRYSTAL SHARD TO SUSTAIN HIM, HOWEVER...
...ALL HIS VICES, ALL HIS CRIMES, CATCH UP WITH HIM.
WOLVERINE DOESN'T NOTICE HORDE'S FINAL MOMENTS.
HE HAS OTHER THINGS ON HIS MIND.
WAS THIS HOW JEAN GREY FELT...
...WHEN SHE BECAME PHOENIX?
I CAN SENSE--
--EVERY-THING!
EVERY PARTICLE OF MATTER, EVERY BURST OF ENERGY, EVERY LIVING THING--IN ALL CREATION!
THE UNIVERSE--
--MINE--
--TO DO WITH AS I WISH.
I CAN TOUCH EVERY SOUL WITH AN AWARENESS OF HONOR, DECENCY, COURAGE...
I CAN TRANSFORM...
...SHAPE...
...CREATE...
...HEAL...
...DESTROY...
...STOP.
BEFORE I START.
I'M TALKIN' LIKE GOD.
ONLY I AIN'T GOD.
THAT WAS HORDE'S TRIP.

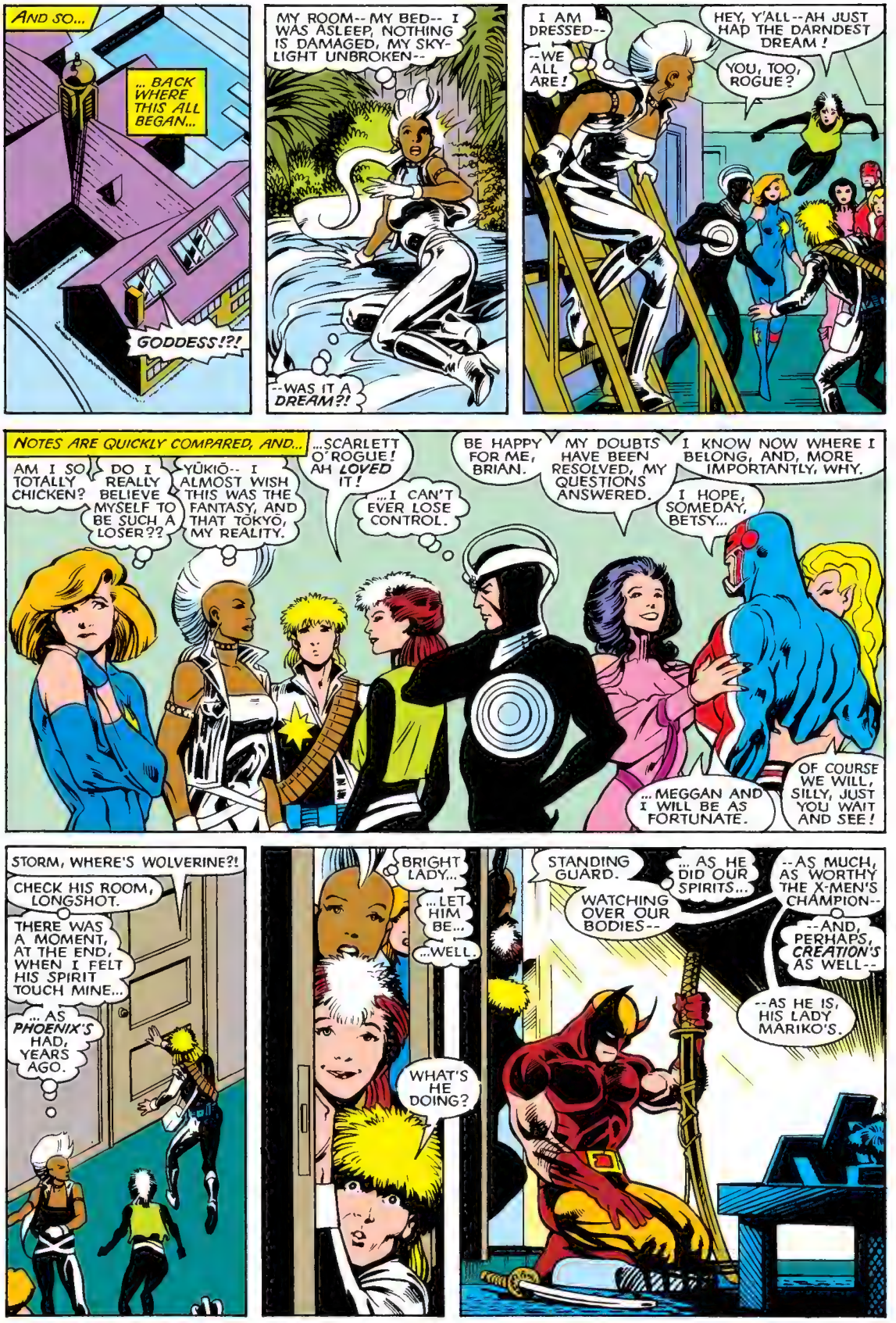

THING I ALWAYS HATED MOST WAS A BODY MUCKIN' WITH MY MIND AN' SOUL.
IF I CAN'T ABIDE THAT BEIN' DONE TO ME...
... I GOT NO RIGHT DOIN' IT TO OTHERS--
--NO MATTER HOW FINE MY RATIONALI-ZATIONS.
BUT I CAN'T JUST WALK AWAY.

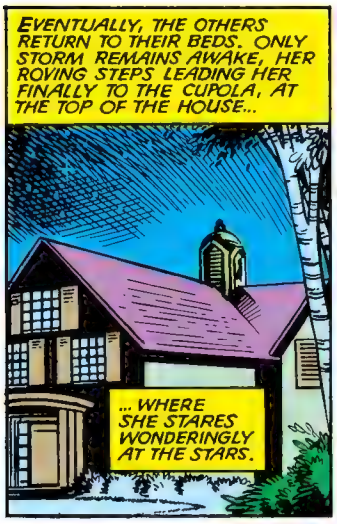
LONG AS THIS CRYSTAL EXISTS, IT'S A THREAT.
BUT THE X-MEN ARE TRAPPED IN THE CITADEL. I SMASH THE CRYSTAL, I COULD BE KILLIN' THEM AS WELL.

WISH THERE WAS A WAY TO SAVE 'EM.
SNIKT
BUT THE LONGER I WAIT...
...THE MORE IRRESISTIBLE THE TEMPTATION GROWS TO USE THE POWER.

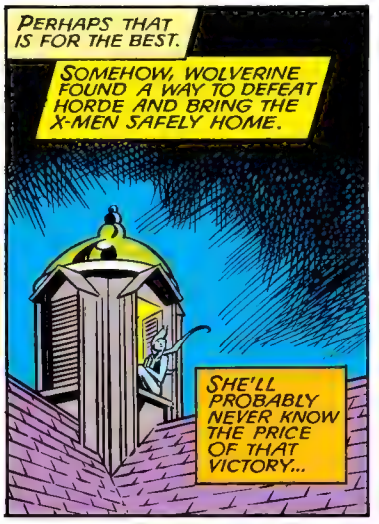
LIKE STORM SAID, TODAY'S AS GOOD A DAY AS ANY TO DIE--
--TOO BAD SHE AIN'T HERE...
...SO I COULD RETURN HER KISS--
SKASH!
--AN' THIS, AS GOOD A WAY AS ANY TO GO!

SKABOOM!


AND SO...
...BACK WHERE THIS ALL BEGAN...
GODDESS!?!
MY ROOM--MY BED--I WAS ASLEEP, NOTHING IS DAMAGED, MY SKYLIGHT UNBROKEN--
--WAS IT A DREAM?!
I AM DRESSED--
--WE ALL ARE!
HEY, Y'ALL--AH JUST HAD THE DARNDEST DREAM!
YOU, TOO, ROGUE?
NOTES ARE QUICKLY COMPARED, AND...
AM I SO TOTALLY CHICKEN?
DO I REALLY BELIEVE MYSELF TO BE SUCH A LOSER??
YŪKIŌ--I ALMOST WISH THIS WAS THE FANTASY, AND THAT TŌKYŌ, MY REALITY.
...SCARLETT O'ROGUE! AH LOVED IT!
...I CAN'T EVER LOSE CONTROL.
BE HAPPY FOR ME, BRIAN.
MY DOUBTS HAVE BEEN RESOLVED, MY QUESTIONS ANSWERED.
I KNOW NOW WHERE I BELONG, AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHY.
I HOPE, SOMEDAY, BETSY...
...MEGGAN AND I WILL BE AS FORTUNATE.
OF COURSE WE WILL, SILLY, JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE!
STORM, WHERE'S WOLVERINE?!
CHECK HIS ROOM, LONGSHOT.
THERE WAS A MOMENT, AT THE END, WHEN I FELT HIS SPIRIT TOUCH MINE...
...AS PHOENIX'S HAD, YEARS AGO.
BRIGHT LADY...
...LET HIM BE...
...WELL.
WHAT'S HE DOING?
STANDING GUARD.
WATCHING OVER OUR BODIES--
...AS HE DID OUR SPIRITS...
--AS MUCH, AS WORTHY THE X-MEN'S CHAMPION--
--AND, PERHAPS, CREATION'S AS WELL--
--AS HE IS, HIS LADY MARIKO'S.


EVENTUALLY, THE OTHERS RETURN TO THEIR BEDS. ONLY STORM REMAINS AWAKE, HER ROVING STEPS LEADING HER FINALLY TO THE CUPOLA, AT THE TOP OF THE HOUSE...
... WHERE SHE STARES WONDERINGLY AT THE STARS.

ALREADY, THE NIGHT'S EVENTS HAVE BEGUN TO FADE FROM HER MEMORY.
SOON, SHE SENSES, IT WILL BE FORGOTTEN, LIKE ANY DREAM.


PERHAPS THAT IS FOR THE BEST.
SOMEHOW, WOLVERINE FOUND A WAY TO DEFEAT HORDE AND BRING THE X-MEN SAFELY HOME.
SHE'LL PROBABLY NEVER KNOW THE PRICE OF THAT VICTORY...

...SAVE THAT IT WAS AS TERRIBLE IN ITS OWN WAY AS THE COST OF DEFEAT.
AND THAT TOO, SHE THINKS, IS FOR THE BEST.
ACROSS THE INFINITE, STATUES STAND TALL AND SILENT BEFORE THEIR SHATTERED CITADEL.
ONLY-- THESE AREN'T STATUES.

EACH CAME IN TURN SEEKING THE CRYSTAL, UNAWARE IT WAS IN REALITY A TEST, AS OLD AND ENDURING AS TIME.
TO ATTAIN THIS ULTIMATE PRIZE...
... YET DENY THE TEMPTATION OF ITS POWER...

... IS THE MARK OF A TRULY MATURE SPECIES. THE QUESTER IS RETURNED HOME, HIS RACE ALLOWED TO EVOLVE TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL.
BUT THOSE WHO TRY TO USE THE CRYSTAL...

... FIND THEMSELVES TRANSFORMED INTO THESE ETERNAL GUARDIANS.
WORSE THEIR RACES ARE GENETICALLY FROZEN IN PLACE, NEVER TO EVOLVE ANOTHER STEP. FOREVER LEFT BEHIND, WHILE THE REST OF CREATION PASSES THEM BY.

HUMANITY WILL NEVER KNOW THE DEBT IT OWES.
FOR TONIGHT, THE RACE FACED ITS ULTIMATE TEST.
AND THANKS TO ITS WAYWARD, OUTCAST CHILDREN-- THE X-MEN-- PASSED.
FIN

MARVEL
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
TM
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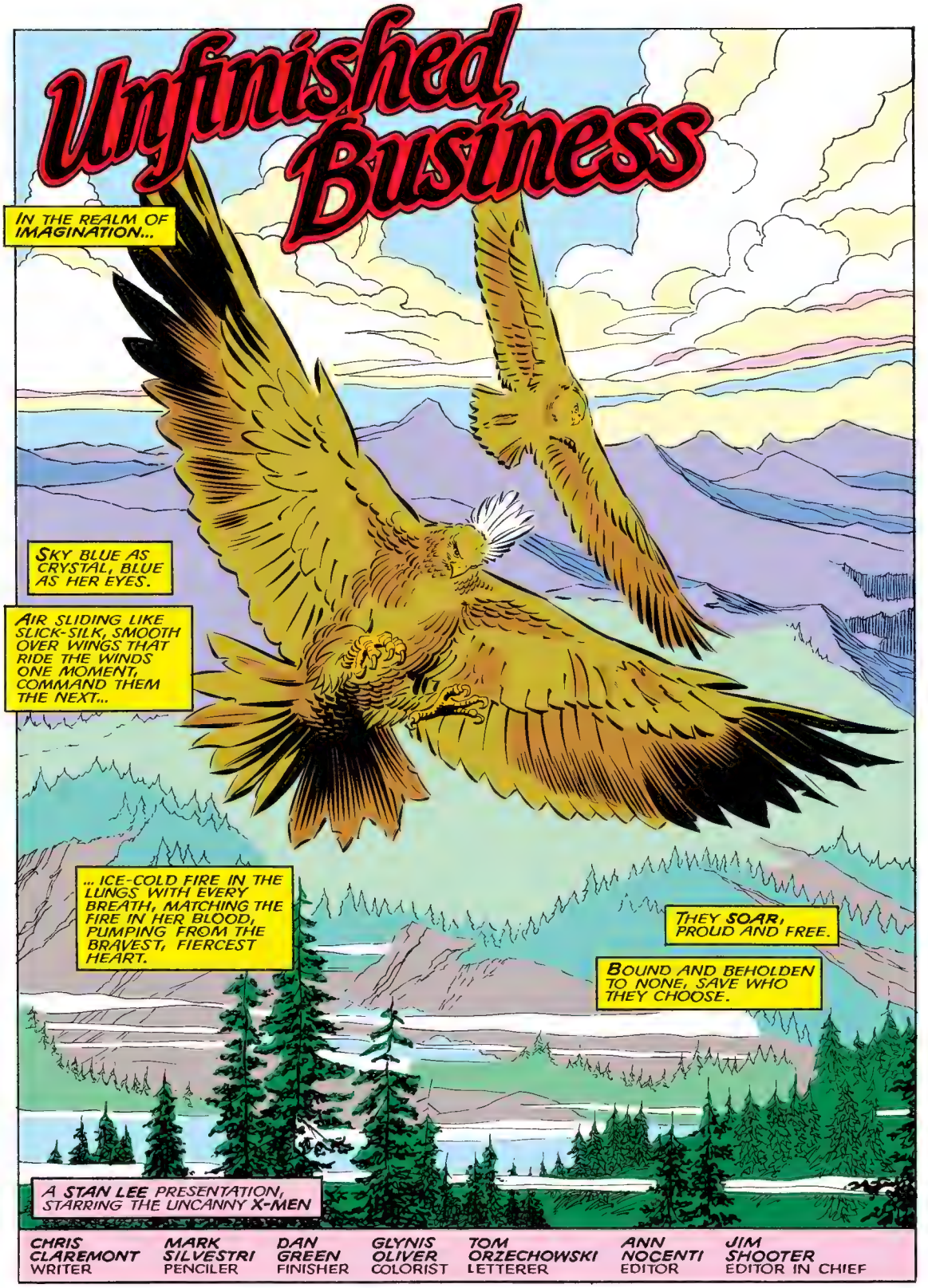
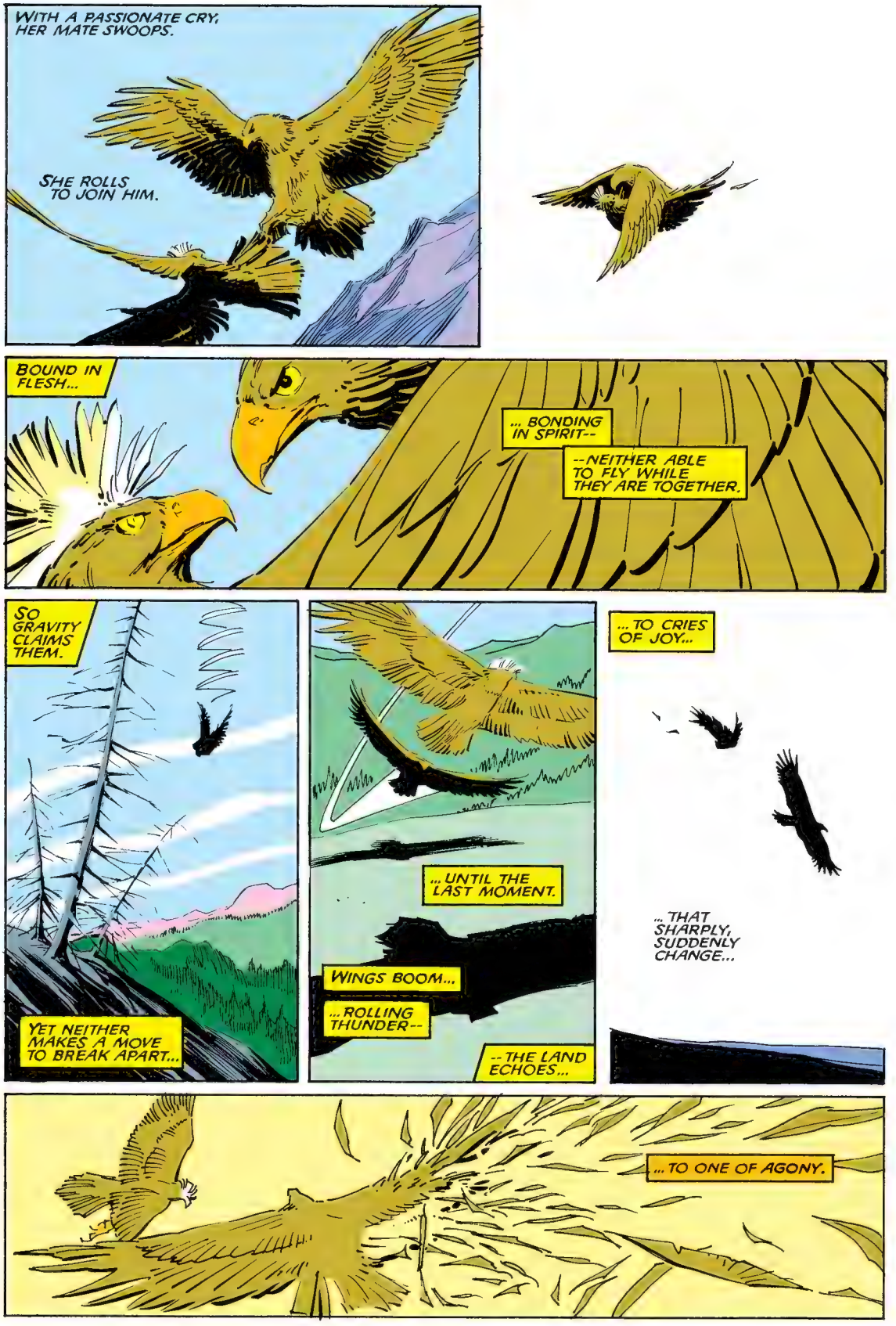
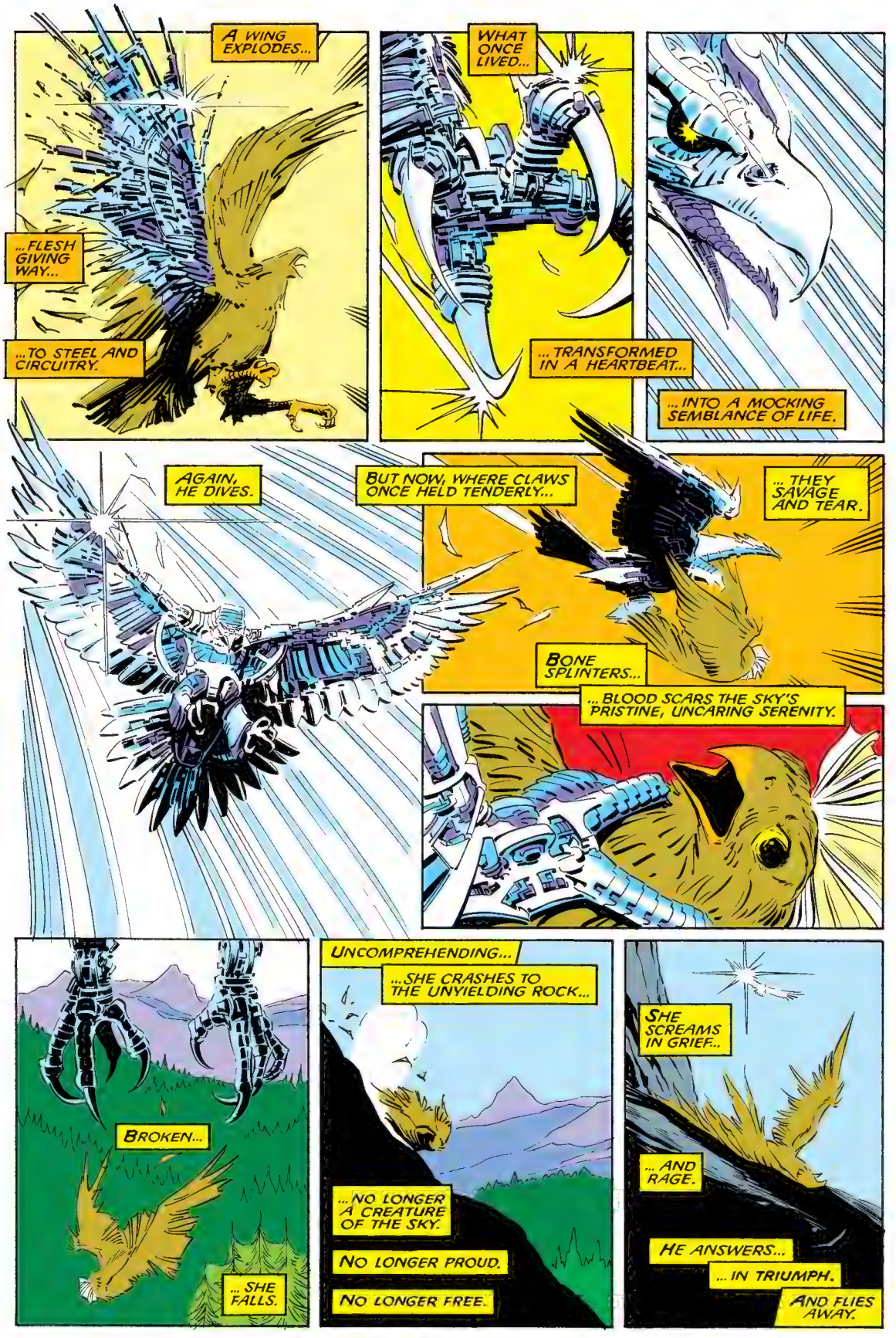
02461
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE
AUTHORITY
FORGE, YOU COWARD! SHOW YOUR FACE!
I WANT MY POWERS BACK--
--NOW!
SILVESTRI + GREEN

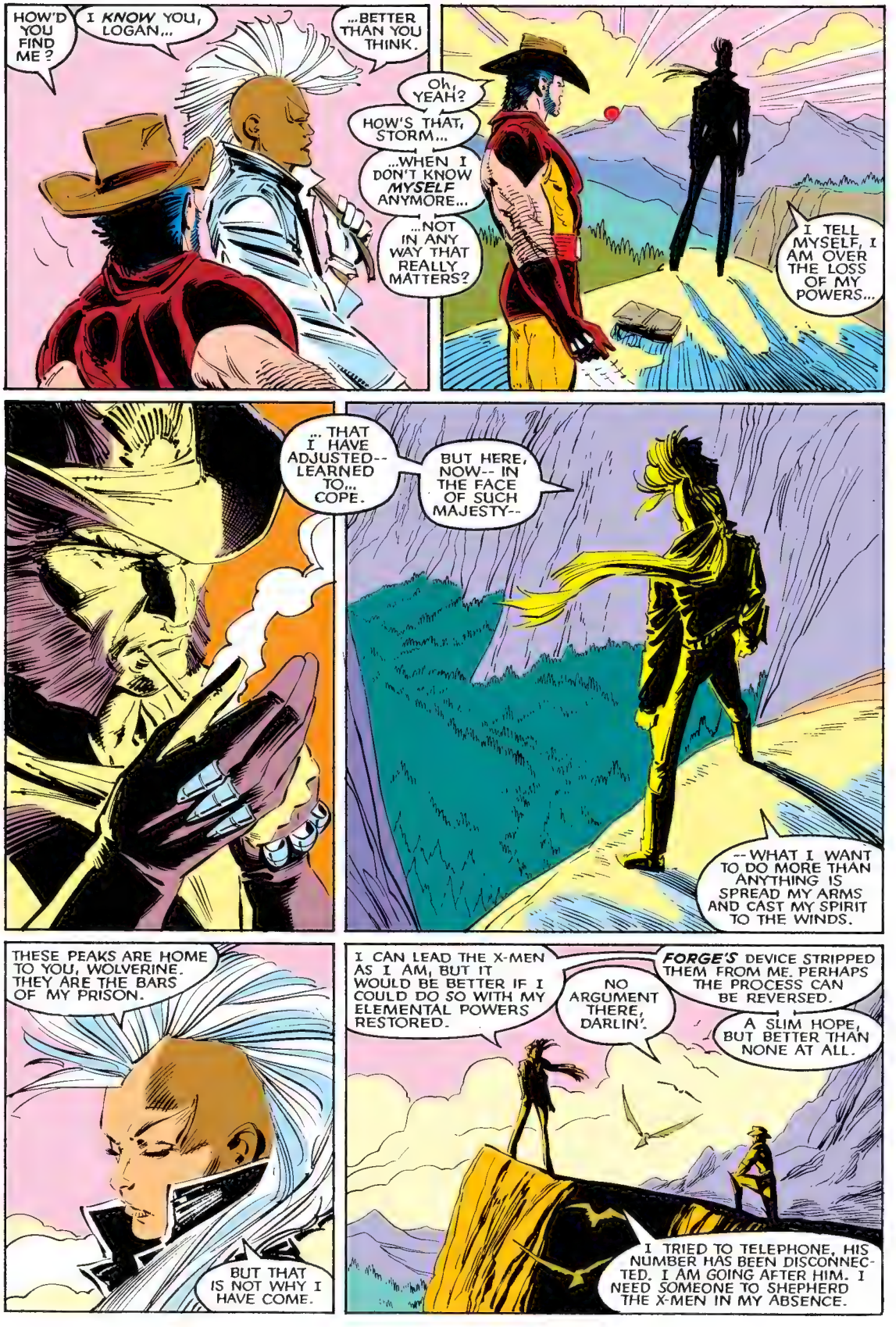

Unfinished Business
IN THE REALM OF IMAGINATION...
SKY BLUE AS CRYSTAL, BLUE AS HER EYES.
AIR SLIDING LIKE SLICK-SILK, SMOOTH OVER WINGS THAT RIDE THE WINDS ONE MOMENT, COMMAND THEM THE NEXT...
... ICE-COLD FIRE IN THE LUNGS WITH EVERY BREATH, MATCHING THE FIRE IN HER BLOOD, PUMPING FROM THE BRAVEST, FIERCEST HEART.
THEY SOAR, PROUD AND FREE.
BOUND AND BEHOLDEN TO NONE, SAVE WHO THEY CHOOSE.
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION, STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN

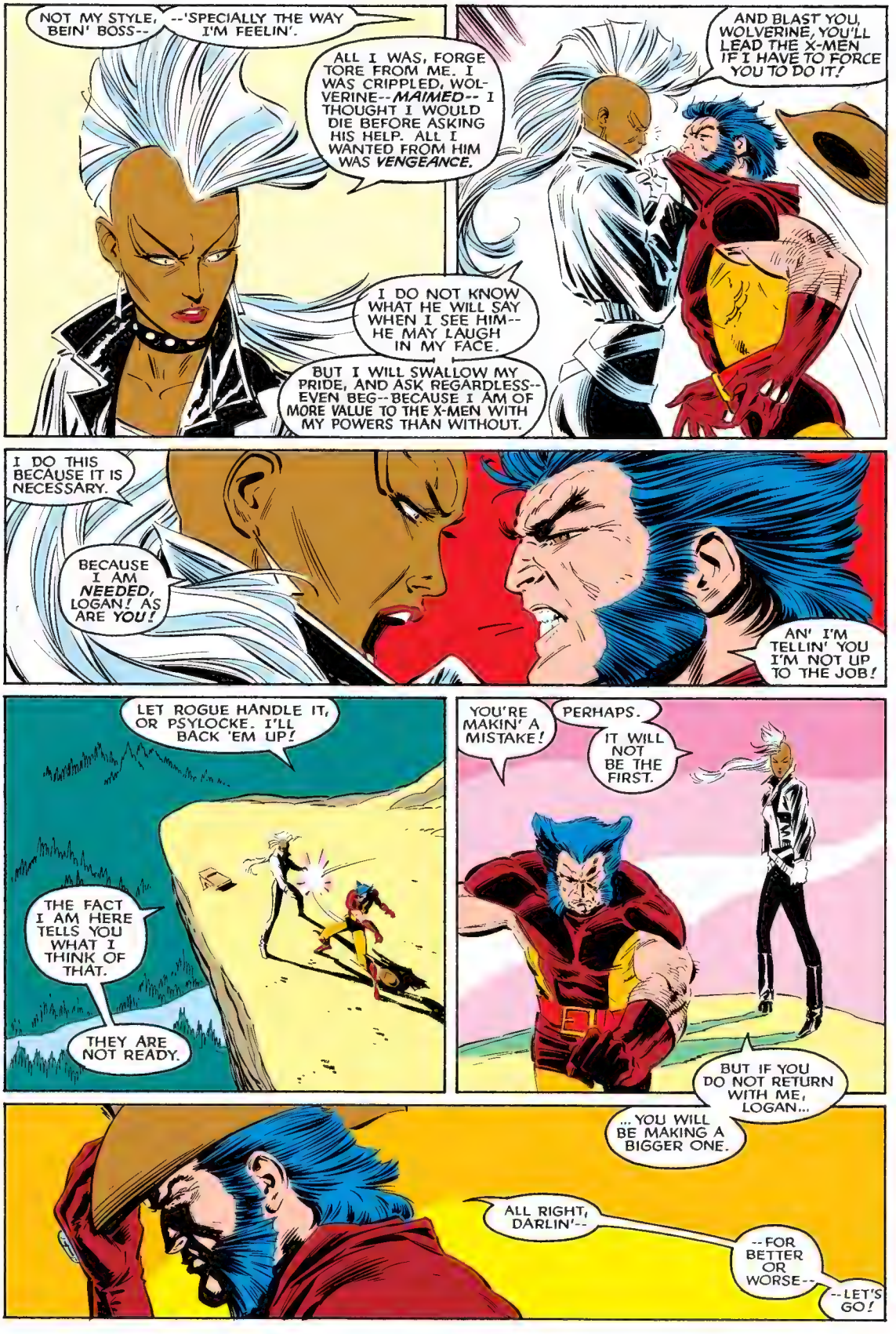
CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER | MARK SILVESTRI PENCILER | DAN GREEN FINISHER | GLYNIS OLIVER COLORIST | TOM ORZECHOWSKI LETTERER | ANN NOCENTI EDITOR | JIM SHOOTER EDITOR IN CHIEF

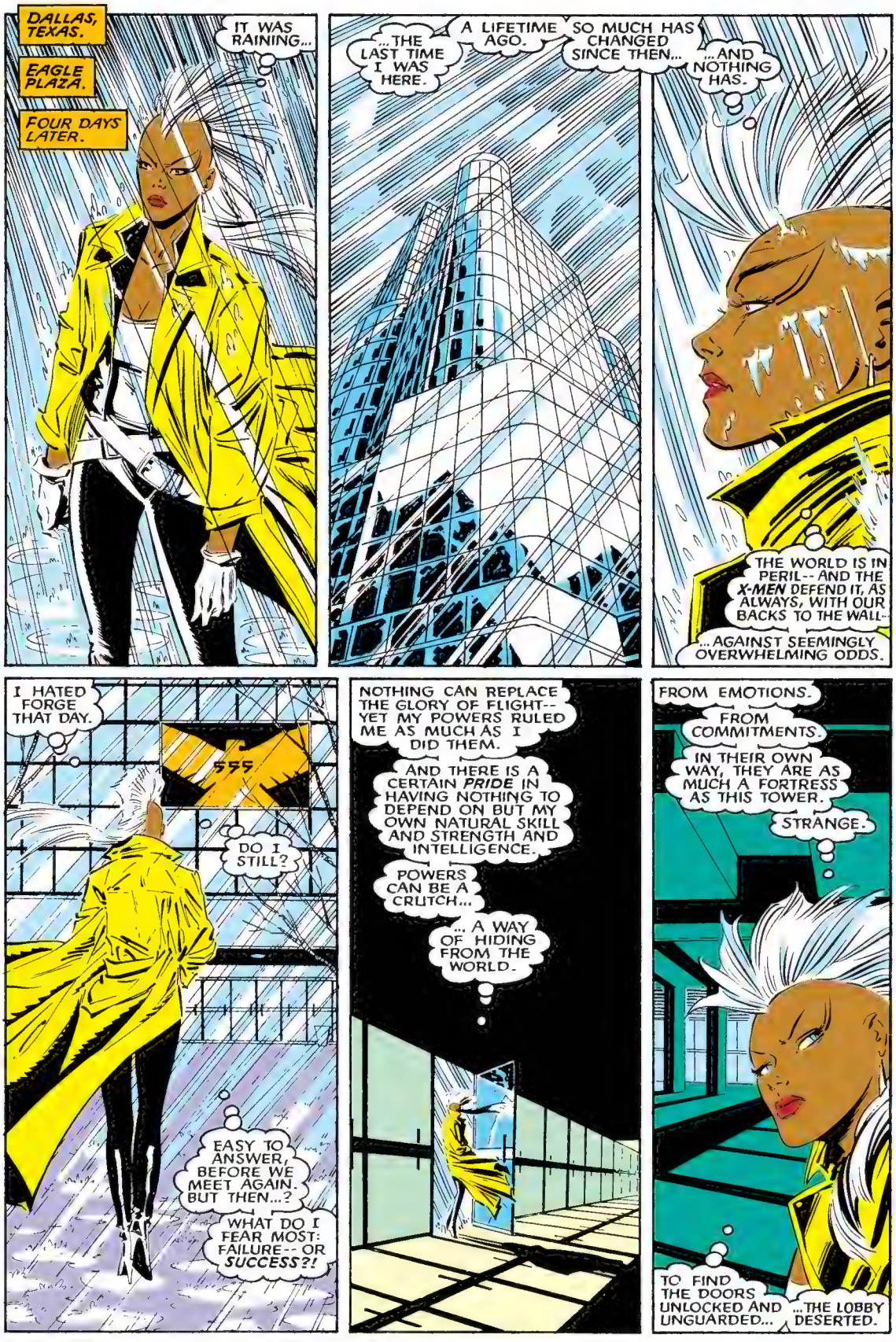

WITH A PASSIONATE CRY, HER MATE SWOOPS.
SHE ROLLS TO JOIN HIM.
BOUND IN FLESH...
... BONDING IN SPIRIT--
--NEITHER ABLE TO FLY WHILE THEY ARE TOGETHER.
SO GRAVITY CLAIMS THEM.
YET NEITHER MAKES A MOVE TO BREAK APART...
... UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT.
WINGS BOOM...
...ROLLING THUNDER--
--THE LAND ECHOES...
... TO CRIES OF JOY...
... THAT SHARPLY, SUDDENLY CHANGE...
... TO ONE OF AGONY.


A WING EXPLODES...
...FLESH GIVING WAY...
...TO STEEL AND CIRCUITRY.
WHAT ONCE LIVED...
...TRANSFORMED IN A HEARTBEAT...
...INTO A MOCKING SEMBLANCE OF LIFE.
AGAIN, HE DIVES.
BUT NOW, WHERE CLAWS ONCE HELD TENDERLY...
...THEY SAVAGE AND TEAR.
BONE SPLINTERS...
...BLOOD SCARS THE SKY'S PRISTINE, UNCARING SERENITY.
BROKEN...
...SHE FALLS.
UNCOMPREHENDING...
...SHE CRASHES TO THE UNYIELDING ROCK...
...NO LONGER A CREATURE OF THE SKY.
NO LONGER PROUD.
NO LONGER FREE.
SHE SCREAMS IN GRIEF...
...AND RAGE.
HE ANSWERS...
...IN TRIUMPH.
AND FLIES AWAY.

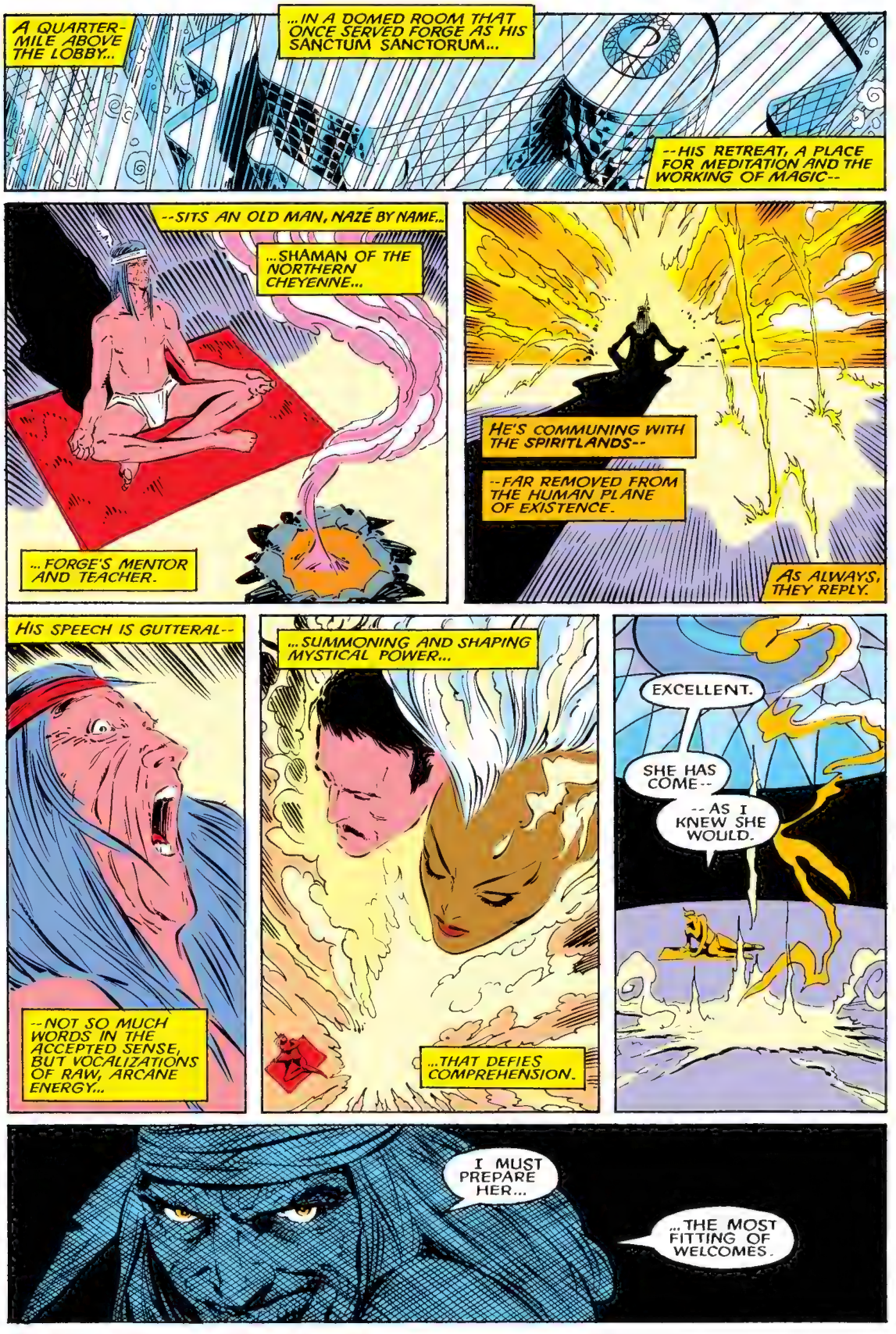
IN THE REALM OF "REALITY"...
YOUNG MOUNTAINS...
...THE SPINE OF A CONTINENT.
NOTHING EASY OR GENTLE ABOUT THIS LAND, NO FOOTHILLS TO MARK THE TRANSITION OFF THE PLAINS. ONE HOUR, YOU'RE ON FLATLAND; THE NEXT, IN THE HEART OF THE HIGH COUNTRY, WITH PEAKS NEARLY TWO MILES HIGH.
WIND AND RAIN HAVEN'T WORN THEM DOWN, ONLY ROUGHED THE EDGES.
WILD COUNTRY.
HOME TO WILD SOULS.
HIS NAME'S LOGAN, HE'S CALLED WOLVERINE.
HE'S A MUTANT, MORE THAN HUMAN, MAINSTAY OF A TEAM OF HEROES.
SHE'S ORORO, CALLED STORM.
ONCE SHE RODE THE WINDS, BUT THOSE DAYS ARE DONE.
STILL, SHE LEADS THE X-MEN.
SNIKT!
IF I'D WANTED COMPANY, DARLIN'--
--I'D HAVE LEFT WORD WHERE I WAS!
IF I COULD AFFORD TO LEAVE YOU BE, MY FRIEND...
... I WOULD NOT BE HERE.
SKLASSH!

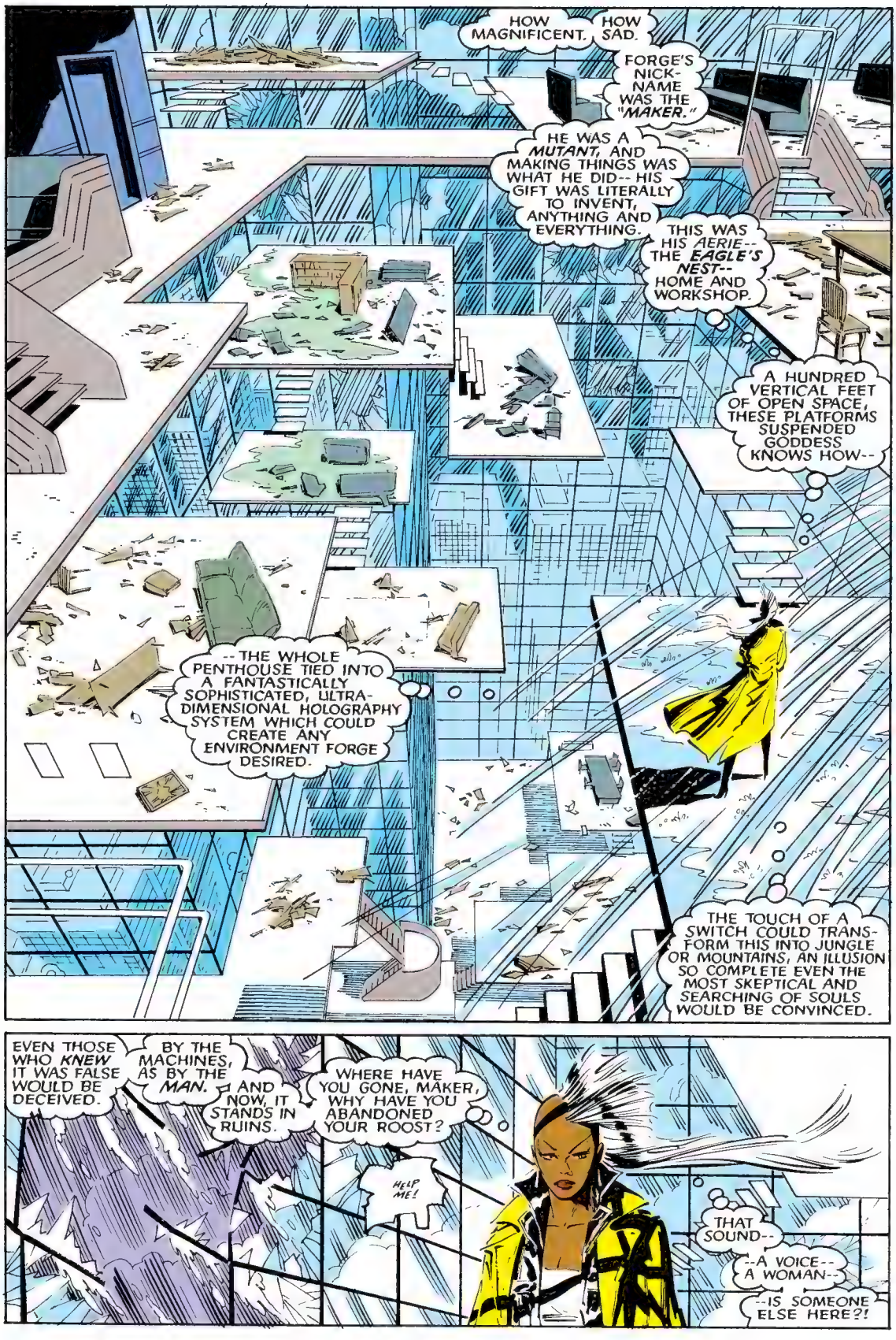

HOW'D YOU FIND ME?
I KNOW YOU, LOGAN...
...BETTER THAN YOU THINK.
Oh, YEAH?
HOW'S THAT, STORM...
...WHEN I DON'T KNOW MYSELF ANYMORE...
...NOT IN ANY WAY THAT REALLY MATTERS?
I TELL MYSELF, I AM OVER THE LOSS OF MY POWERS...
... THAT I HAVE ADJUSTED-- LEARNED TO... COPE.
BUT HERE, NOW-- IN THE FACE OF SUCH MAJESTY--
--WHAT I WANT TO DO MORE THAN ANYTHING IS SPREAD MY ARMS AND CAST MY SPIRIT TO THE WINDS.
THESE PEAKS ARE HOME TO YOU, WOLVERINE. THEY ARE THE BARS OF MY PRISON.
BUT THAT IS NOT WHY I HAVE COME.
I CAN LEAD THE X-MEN AS I AM, BUT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF I COULD DO SO WITH MY ELEMENTAL POWERS RESTORED.
NO ARGUMENT THERE, DARLIN'.
FORGE'S DEVICE STRIPPED THEM FROM ME. PERHAPS THE PROCESS CAN BE REVERSED.
A SLIM HOPE, BUT BETTER THAN NONE AT ALL.
I TRIED TO TELEPHONE, HIS NUMBER HAS BEEN DISCONNECTED. I AM GOING AFTER HIM. I NEED SOMEONE TO SHEPHERD THE X-MEN IN MY ABSENCE.

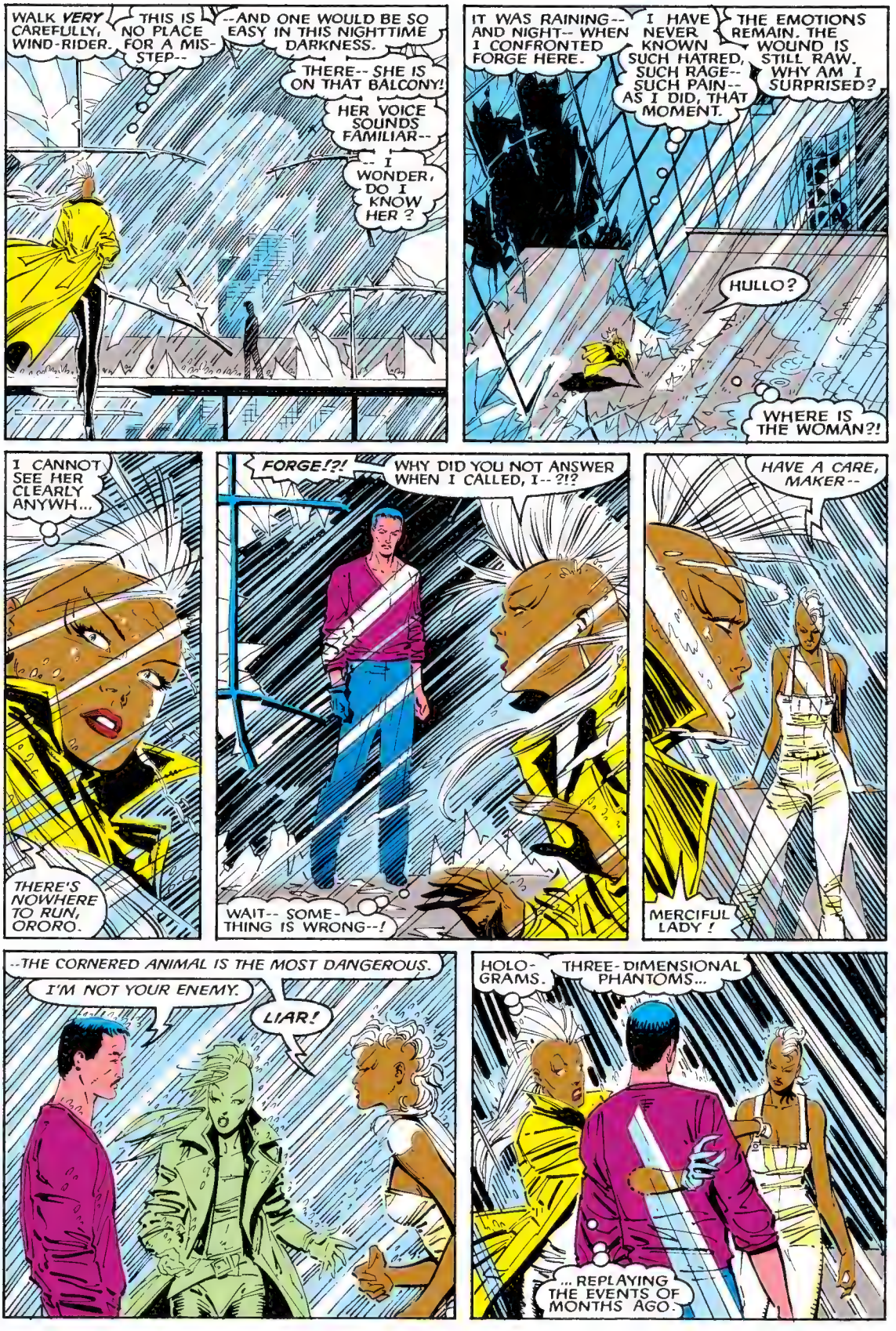

NOT MY STYLE, BEIN' BOSS--
--'SPECIALLY THE WAY I'M FEELIN'.
ALL I WAS, FORGE TORE FROM ME. I WAS CRIPPLED, WOLVERINE--*MAIMED*-- I THOUGHT I WOULD DIE BEFORE ASKING HIS HELP. ALL I WANTED FROM HIM WAS *VENGEANCE.*
I DO NOT KNOW WHAT HE WILL SAY WHEN I SEE HIM--HE MAY LAUGH IN MY FACE.
BUT I WILL SWALLOW MY PRIDE, AND ASK REGARDLESS--EVEN BEG--BECAUSE I AM OF MORE VALUE TO THE X-MEN WITH MY POWERS THAN WITHOUT.
AND BLAST YOU, WOLVERINE, YOU'LL LEAD THE X-MEN IF I HAVE TO FORCE YOU TO DO IT!
I DO THIS BECAUSE IT IS NECESSARY.
BECAUSE I AM *NEEDED*, LOGAN! AS ARE *YOU!*
AN' I'M TELLIN' YOU I'M NOT UP TO THE JOB!
LET ROGUE HANDLE IT, OR PSYLOCKE. I'LL BACK 'EM UP!
THE FACT I AM HERE TELLS YOU WHAT I THINK OF THAT.
THEY ARE NOT READY.
YOU'RE MAKIN' A MISTAKE!
PERHAPS.
IT WILL NOT BE THE FIRST.
BUT IF YOU DO NOT RETURN WITH ME, LOGAN...
...YOU WILL BE MAKING A BIGGER ONE.
ALL RIGHT, DARLIN'--
--FOR BETTER OR WORSE--
--LET'S GO!

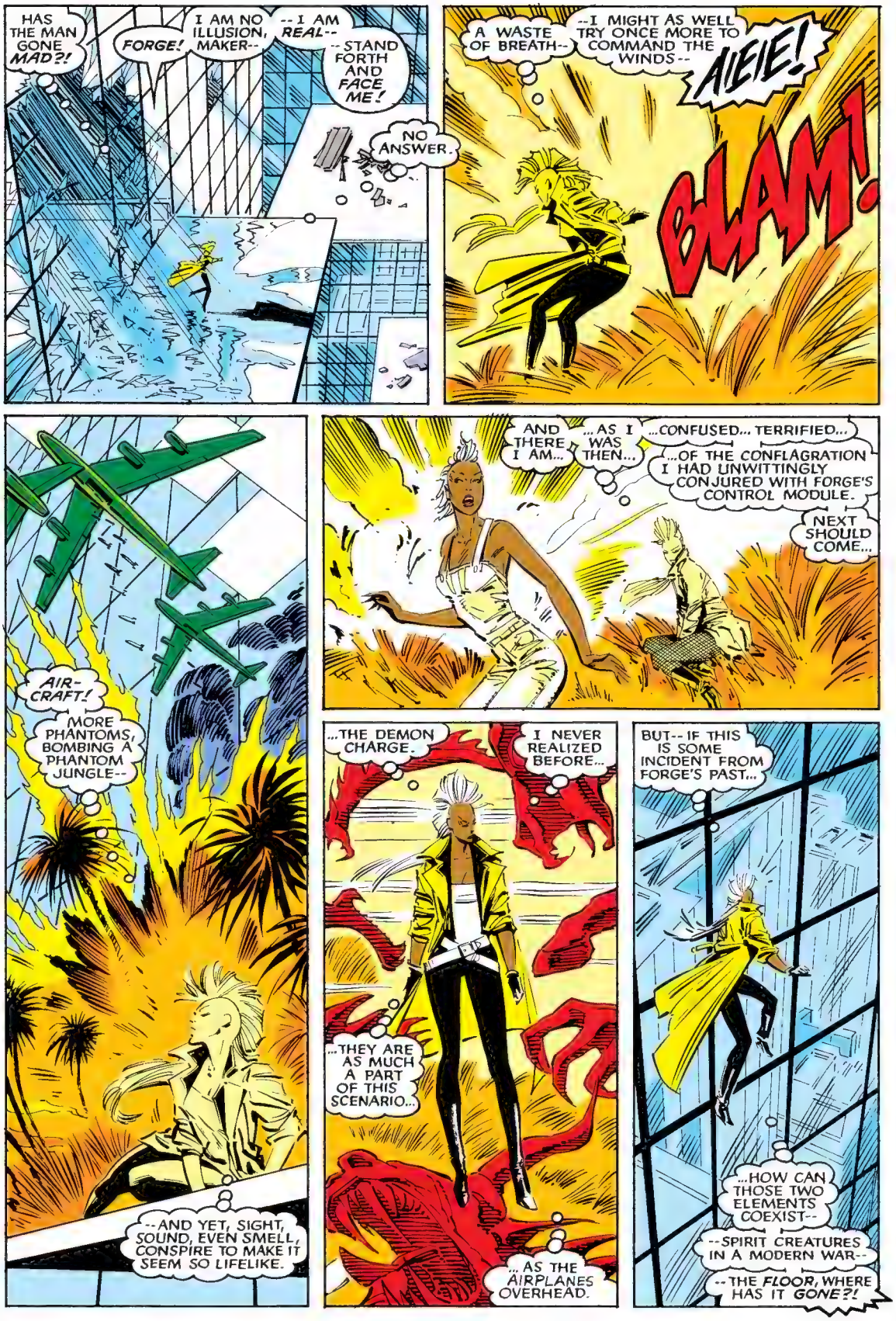

DALLAS, TEXAS.
EAGLE PLAZA.
FOUR DAYS LATER.
IT WAS RAINING...
...THE LAST TIME I WAS HERE.
A LIFETIME AGO.
SO MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE THEN...
...AND NOTHING HAS.
THE WORLD IS IN PERIL-- AND THE X-MEN DEFEND IT, AS ALWAYS, WITH OUR BACKS TO THE WALL--
...AGAINST SEEMINGLY OVERWHELMING ODDS.
I HATED FORGE THAT DAY.
555
DO I STILL?
EASY TO ANSWER, BEFORE WE MEET AGAIN. BUT THEN...?
WHAT DO I FEAR MOST: FAILURE-- OR SUCCESS?!
NOTHING CAN REPLACE THE GLORY OF FLIGHT-- YET MY POWERS RULED ME AS MUCH AS I DID THEM.
AND THERE IS A CERTAIN PRIDE IN HAVING NOTHING TO DEPEND ON BUT MY OWN NATURAL SKILL AND STRENGTH AND INTELLIGENCE.
POWERS CAN BE A CRUTCH...
...A WAY OF HIDING FROM THE WORLD.
FROM EMOTIONS.
FROM COMMITMENTS.
IN THEIR OWN WAY, THEY ARE AS MUCH A FORTRESS AS THIS TOWER.
STRANGE.
TO FIND THE DOORS UNLOCKED AND UNGUARDED...
...THE LOBBY DESERTED.

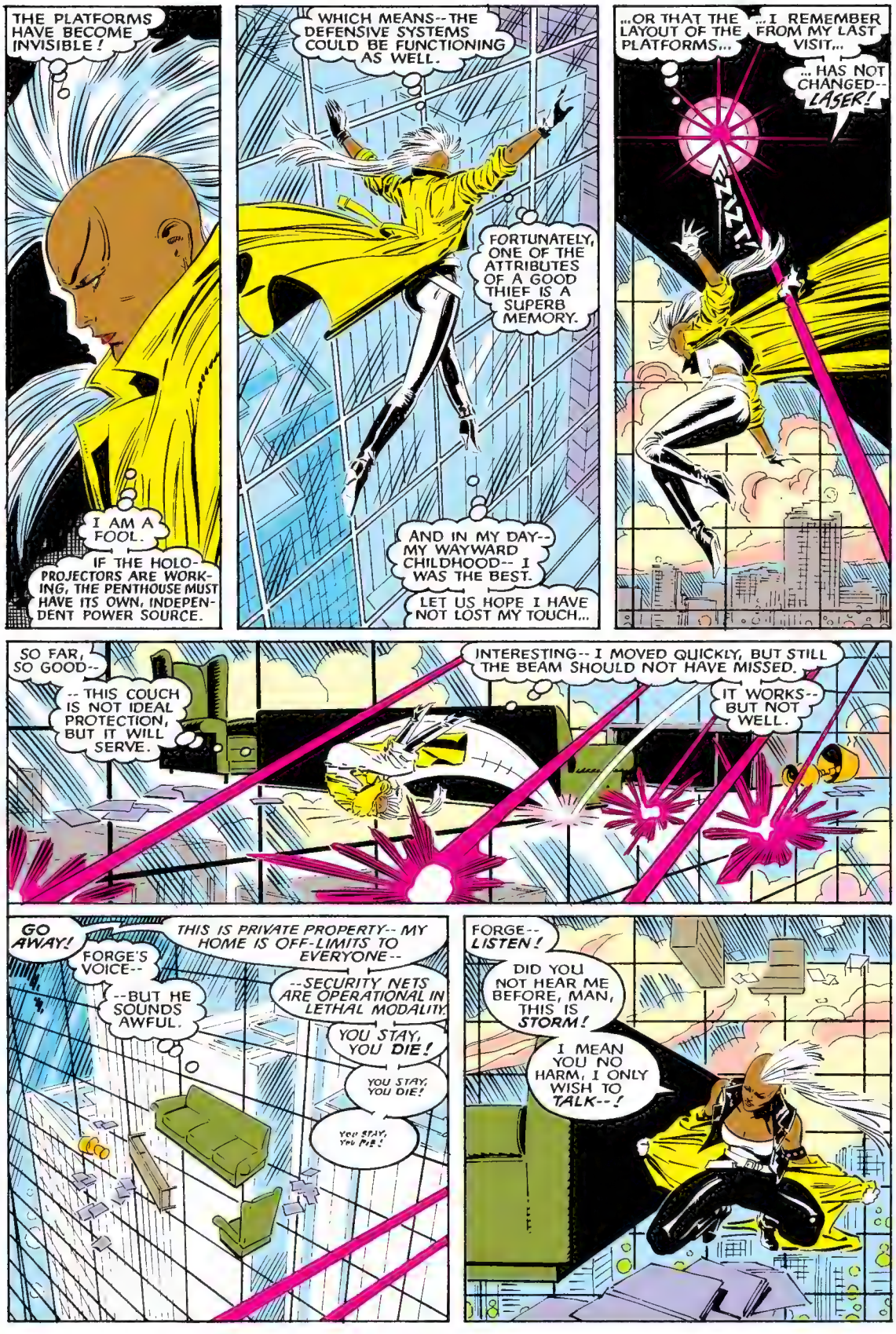
THERE ARE AUTOMATIC DEFENSES.
IMPOSSIBLE TO AVOID OR PROTECT MYSELF AGAINST.
NO REACTION--
--THEY MUST BE INACTIVE.
THE SECURITY CONSOLE-- COMPLETELY TURNED OFF--
--THICK WITH DUST.
NO ONE HAS BEEN HERE IN AGES.
WHAT IS THIS...?
A NOTICE FROM THE CITY...
...OF CONDEMNATION?!?
FORGE, WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU?!
PHONE IS DEAD.
BUILDING NDEMNATION
NO POWER, EITHER, FOR ANY LIGHTS.
FORTUNATELY, I SEE EXCEPTIONALLY WELL IN THE DARK.
ASSUMING, THAT IS, I CHOOSE TO PRESS ON.
THERE IS NO REASON TO EXPECT HIM TO BE HERE. QUITE THE OPPOSITE, IN FACT.
FORGE DESIGNED WEAPONS FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT-- IT WAS FOR THEM HE CONSTRUCTED THE INHIBITOR THAT TOOK AWAY MY MUTANT POWERS-- LOGICALLY, THEN, IF HE COULD NO LONGER WORK HERE, THEY WOULD MOVE HIM SOMEPLACE ELSE.
BETTER TO BE SURE.
A SEARCH MAY PROVIDE SOME CLUE TO WHERE HE IS.
BESIDES, IF I WALK AWAY WITHOUT SOLVING THIS MYSTERY...
...NEITHER IMAGINATION NOR CONSCIENCE...
STAIRWAY
...WILL GIVE ME A MOMENT'S PEACE.
NO ELEVATOR--
--AND IT IS A HUNDRED FLOORS TO FORGE'S PENTHOUSE.
BRIGHT LADY-- THIS HAD BETTER BE WORTH THE EFFORT.

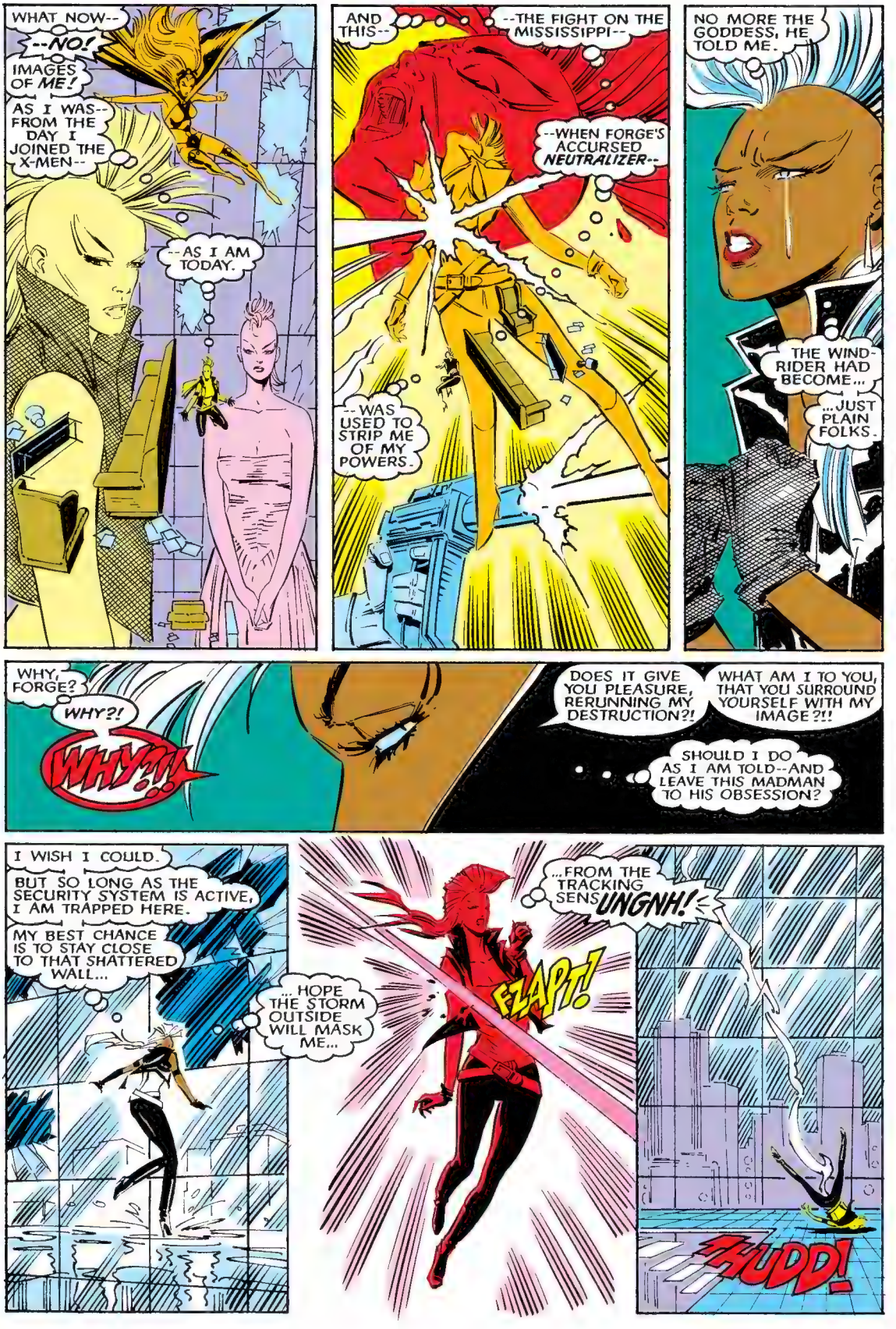

A QUARTER-MILE ABOVE THE LOBBY...
...IN A DOMED ROOM THAT ONCE SERVED FORGE AS HIS SANCTUM SANCTORUM...
--HIS RETREAT, A PLACE FOR MEDITATION AND THE WORKING OF MAGIC--
--SITS AN OLD MAN, NAZÉ BY NAME...
...SHAMAN OF THE NORTHERN CHEYENNE...
...FORGE'S MENTOR AND TEACHER.
HE'S COMMUNING WITH THE SPIRITLANDS--
--FAR REMOVED FROM THE HUMAN PLANE OF EXISTENCE.
AS ALWAYS, THEY REPLY.
HIS SPEECH IS GUTTERAL--
--NOT SO MUCH WORDS IN THE ACCEPTED SENSE, BUT VOCALIZATIONS OF RAW, ARCANE ENERGY...
...SUMMONING AND SHAPING MYSTICAL POWER...
...THAT DEFIES COMPREHENSION.
EXCELLENT.
SHE HAS COME--
--AS I KNEW SHE WOULD.
I MUST PREPARE HER...
...THE MOST FITTING OF WELCOMES.

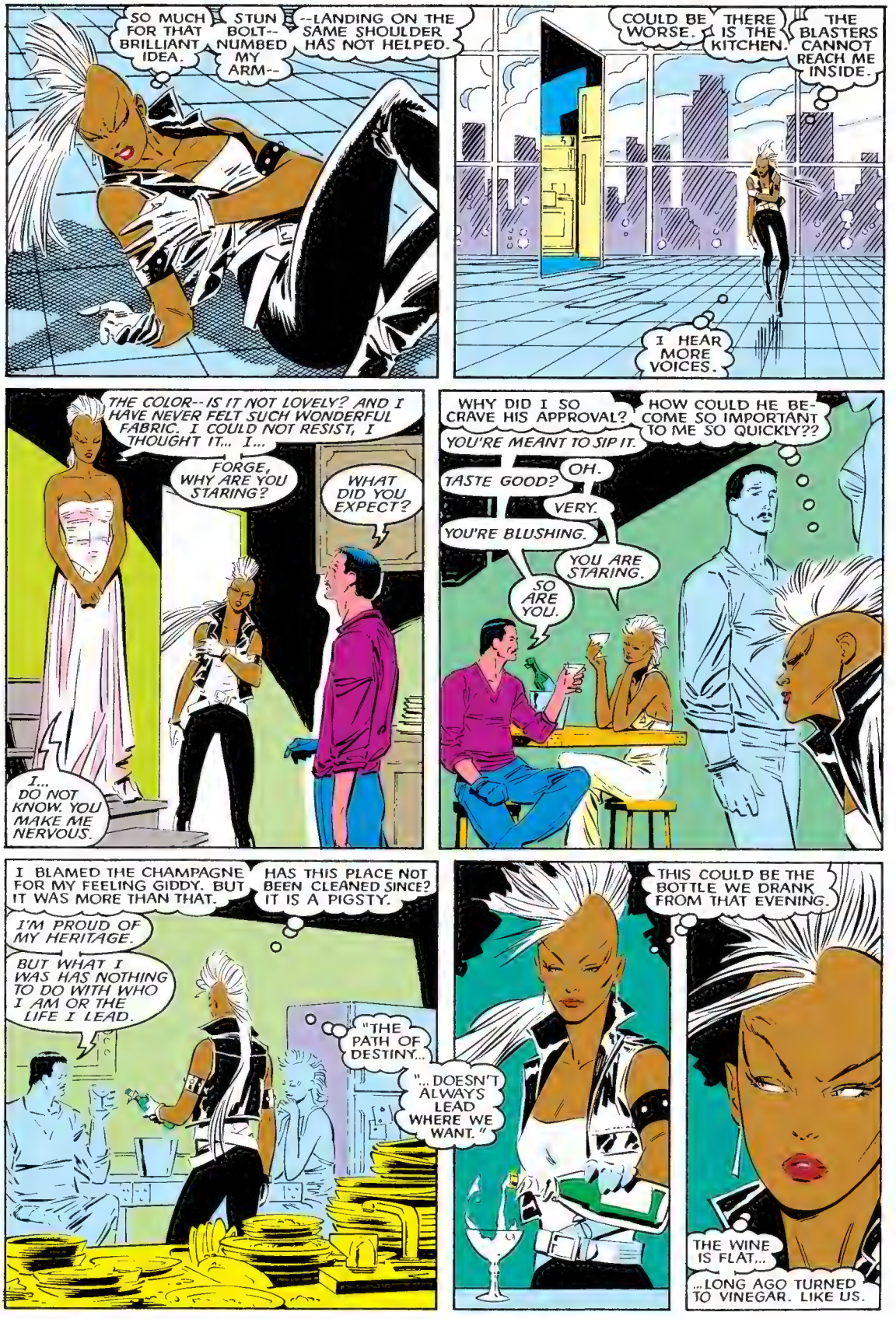

HOW MAGNIFICENT.
HOW SAD.
FORGE'S NICK-NAME WAS THE "MAKER."
HE WAS A MUTANT, AND MAKING THINGS WAS WHAT HE DID-- HIS GIFT WAS LITERALLY TO INVENT, ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING.
THIS WAS HIS AERIE-- THE EAGLE'S NEST-- HOME AND WORKSHOP.
A HUNDRED VERTICAL FEET OF OPEN SPACE, THESE PLATFORMS SUSPENDED GODDESS KNOWS HOW--
--THE WHOLE PENTHOUSE TIED INTO A FANTASTICALLY SOPHISTICATED, ULTRA-DIMENSIONAL HOLOGRAPHY SYSTEM WHICH COULD CREATE ANY ENVIRONMENT FORGE DESIRED.
THE TOUCH OF A SWITCH COULD TRANS-FORM THIS INTO JUNGLE OR MOUNTAINS, AN ILLUSION SO COMPLETE EVEN THE MOST SKEPTICAL AND SEARCHING OF SOULS WOULD BE CONVINCED.
EVEN THOSE WHO KNEW IT WAS FALSE WOULD BE DECEIVED.
BY THE MACHINES, AS BY THE MAN.
AND NOW, IT STANDS IN RUINS.
WHERE HAVE YOU GONE, MAKER, WHY HAVE YOU ABANDONED YOUR ROOST?
HELP ME!
THAT SOUND--
--A VOICE-- A WOMAN--
--IS SOMEONE ELSE HERE?!

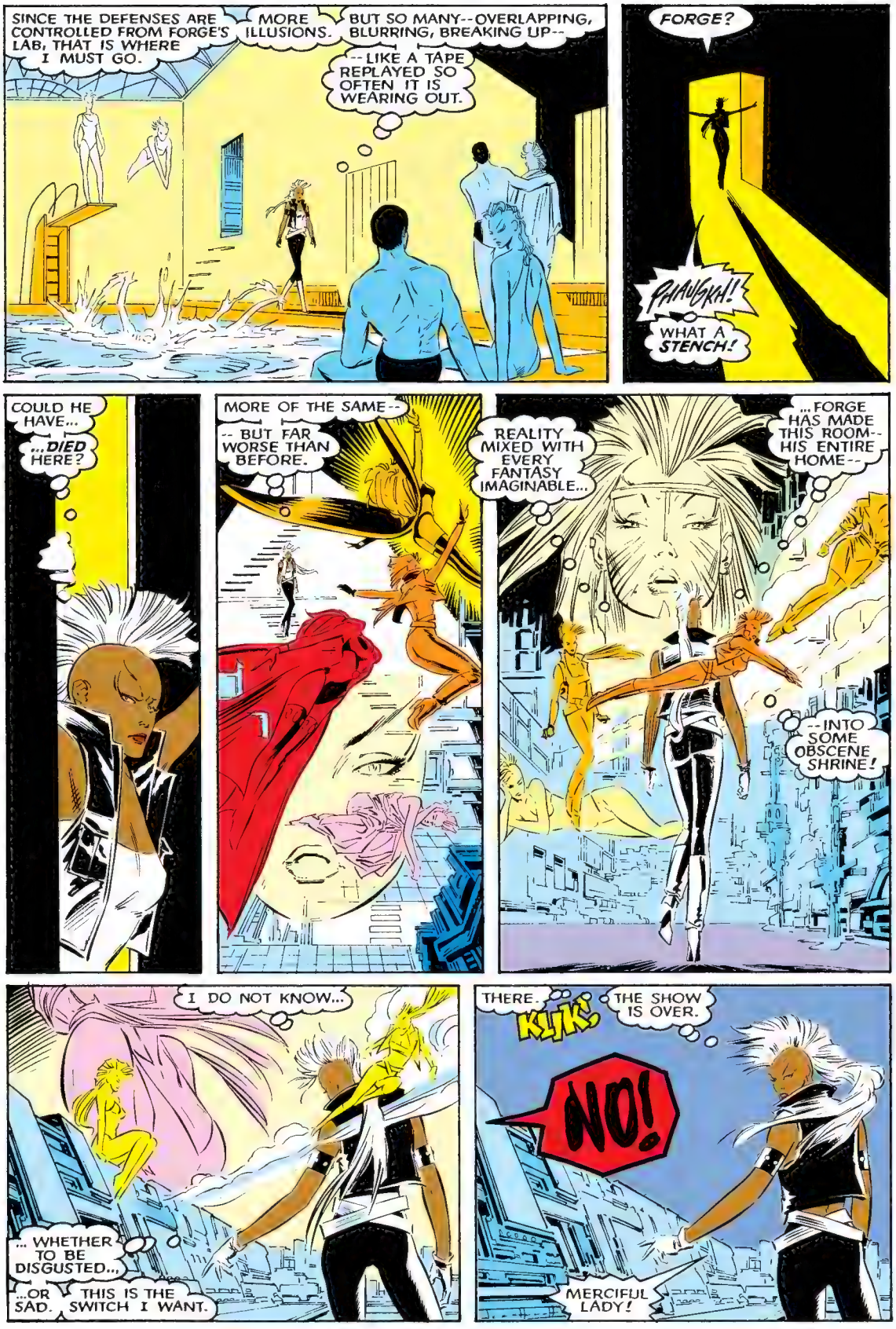

WALK VERY CAREFULLY, WIND-RIDER.
THIS IS NO PLACE FOR A MIS-STEP--
--AND ONE WOULD BE SO EASY IN THIS NIGHTTIME DARKNESS.
THERE-- SHE IS ON THAT BALCONY!
HER VOICE SOUNDS FAMILIAR--
-- I WONDER, DO I KNOW HER ?
IT WAS RAINING-- AND NIGHT-- WHEN I CONFRONTED FORGE HERE.
I HAVE NEVER KNOWN SUCH HATRED, SUCH RAGE-- SUCH PAIN-- AS I DID, THAT MOMENT.
THE EMOTIONS REMAIN. THE WOUND IS STILL RAW. WHY AM I SURPRISED?
HULLO?
WHERE IS THE WOMAN?!
I CANNOT SEE HER CLEARLY ANYWH...
THERE'S NOWHERE TO RUN, ORORO.
FORGE!?!
WHY DID YOU NOT ANSWER WHEN I CALLED, I-- ?!?
WAIT-- SOME-THING IS WRONG--!
HAVE A CARE, MAKER--
MERCIFUL LADY !
--THE CORNERED ANIMAL IS THE MOST DANGEROUS.
I'M NOT YOUR ENEMY.
LIAR!
HOLO-GRAMS.
THREE-DIMENSIONAL PHANTOMS...
... REPLAYING THE EVENTS OF MONTHS AGO.

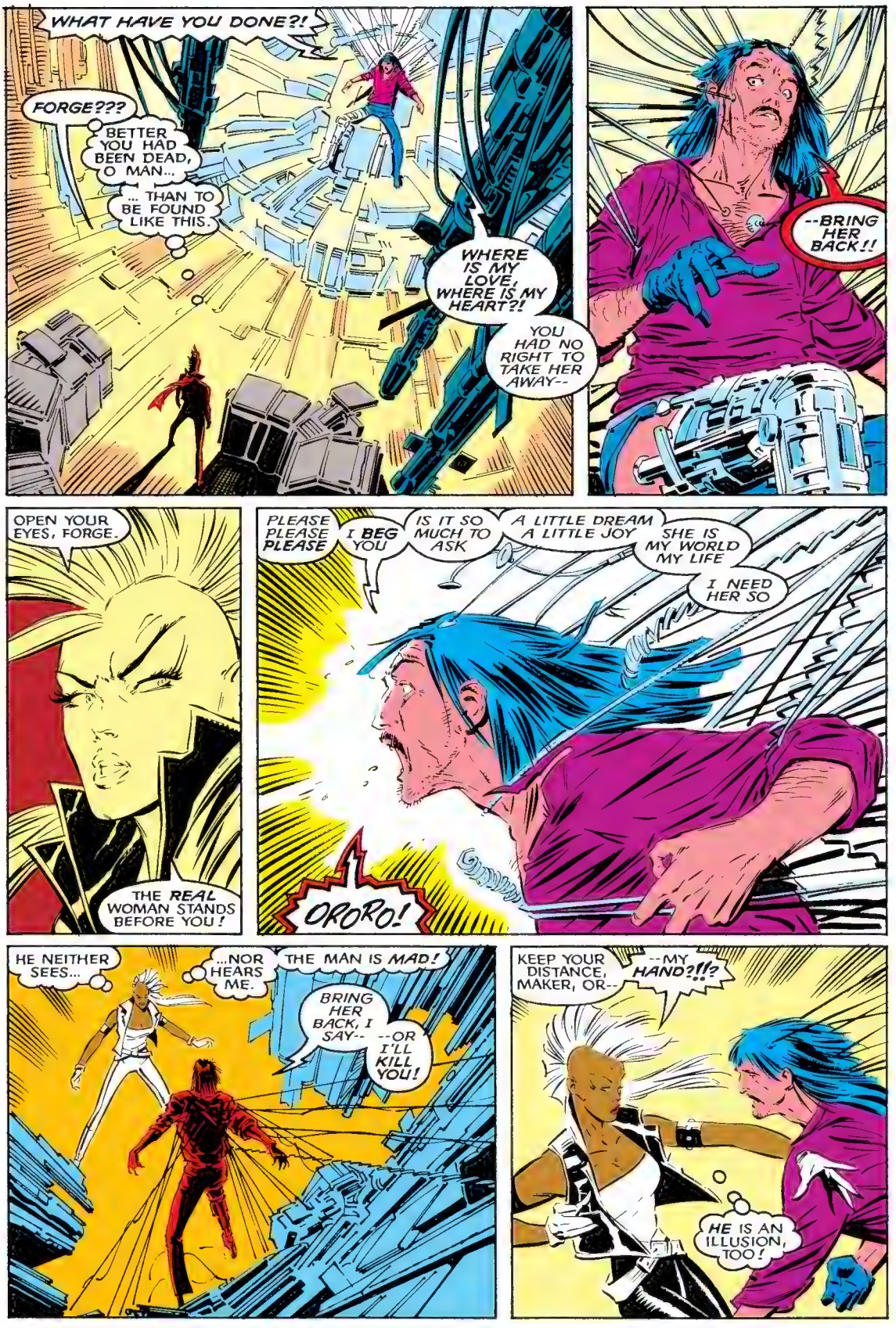

HAS THE MAN GONE MAD?!
FORGE!
I AM NO ILLUSION, MAKER--
--I AM REAL--
--STAND FORTH AND FACE ME!
NO ANSWER.
A WASTE OF BREATH--
--I MIGHT AS WELL TRY ONCE MORE TO COMMAND THE WINDS--
AIEIE!
BLAM!
AIR-CRAFT!
MORE PHANTOMS, BOMBING A PHANTOM JUNGLE--
--AND YET, SIGHT, SOUND, EVEN SMELL, CONSPIRE TO MAKE IT SEEM SO LIFELIKE.
AND THERE I AM...
...AS I WAS THEN...
...CONFUSED... TERRIFIED...
...OF THE CONFLAGRATION I HAD UNWITTINGLY CONJURED WITH FORGE'S CONTROL MODULE.
NEXT SHOULD COME...
...THE DEMON CHARGE.
I NEVER REALIZED BEFORE...
...THEY ARE AS MUCH A PART OF THIS SCENARIO...
...AS THE AIRPLANES OVERHEAD.
BUT-- IF THIS IS SOME INCIDENT FROM FORGE'S PAST...
...HOW CAN THOSE TWO ELEMENTS COEXIST--
--SPIRIT CREATURES IN A MODERN WAR--
--THE FLOOR, WHERE HAS IT GONE?!


THE PLATFORMS HAVE BECOME INVISIBLE!
I AM A FOOL.
IF THE HOLO-PROJECTORS ARE WORKING, THE PENTHOUSE MUST HAVE ITS OWN, INDEPENDENT POWER SOURCE.
WHICH MEANS--THE DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS COULD BE FUNCTIONING AS WELL.
FORTUNATELY, ONE OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD THIEF IS A SUPERB MEMORY.
AND IN MY DAY--MY WAYWARD CHILDHOOD-- I WAS THE BEST.
LET US HOPE I HAVE NOT LOST MY TOUCH...
...OR THAT THE LAYOUT OF THE PLATFORMS...
...I REMEMBER FROM MY LAST VISIT...
...HAS NOT CHANGED--LASER!
ZZZT!
SO FAR, SO GOOD--
-- THIS COUCH IS NOT IDEAL PROTECTION, BUT IT WILL SERVE.
INTERESTING-- I MOVED QUICKLY, BUT STILL THE BEAM SHOULD NOT HAVE MISSED.
IT WORKS-- BUT NOT WELL.
GO AWAY!
FORGE'S VOICE--
--BUT HE SOUNDS AWFUL.
THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY-- MY HOME IS OFF-LIMITS TO EVERYONE--
--SECURITY NETS ARE OPERATIONAL IN LETHAL MODALITY.
YOU STAY, YOU DIE!
YOU STAY, YOU DIE!
YOU STAY, YOU DIE!
FORGE-- LISTEN!
DID YOU NOT HEAR ME BEFORE, MAN, THIS IS STORM!
I MEAN YOU NO HARM, I ONLY WISH TO TALK--!


WHAT NOW--
--NO!
IMAGES OF ME!
AS I WAS--FROM THE DAY I JOINED THE X-MEN--
--AS I AM TODAY.
AND THIS--
--THE FIGHT ON THE MISSISSIPPI--
--WHEN FORGE'S ACCURSED NEUTRALIZER--
--WAS USED TO STRIP ME OF MY POWERS.
NO MORE THE GODDESS, HE TOLD ME.
THE WIND-RIDER HAD BECOME...
...JUST PLAIN FOLKS.
WHY, FORGE?
WHY?!
WHY?!!
DOES IT GIVE YOU PLEASURE, RERUNNING MY DESTRUCTION?!
WHAT AM I TO YOU, THAT YOU SURROUND YOURSELF WITH MY IMAGE?!!
SHOULD I DO AS I AM TOLD--AND LEAVE THIS MADMAN TO HIS OBSESSION?
I WISH I COULD.
BUT SO LONG AS THE SECURITY SYSTEM IS ACTIVE, I AM TRAPPED HERE.
MY BEST CHANCE IS TO STAY CLOSE TO THAT SHATTERED WALL...
...HOPE THE STORM OUTSIDE WILL MASK ME...
...FROM THE TRACKING SENS
UNGNH!
FLAP!
THUDD!

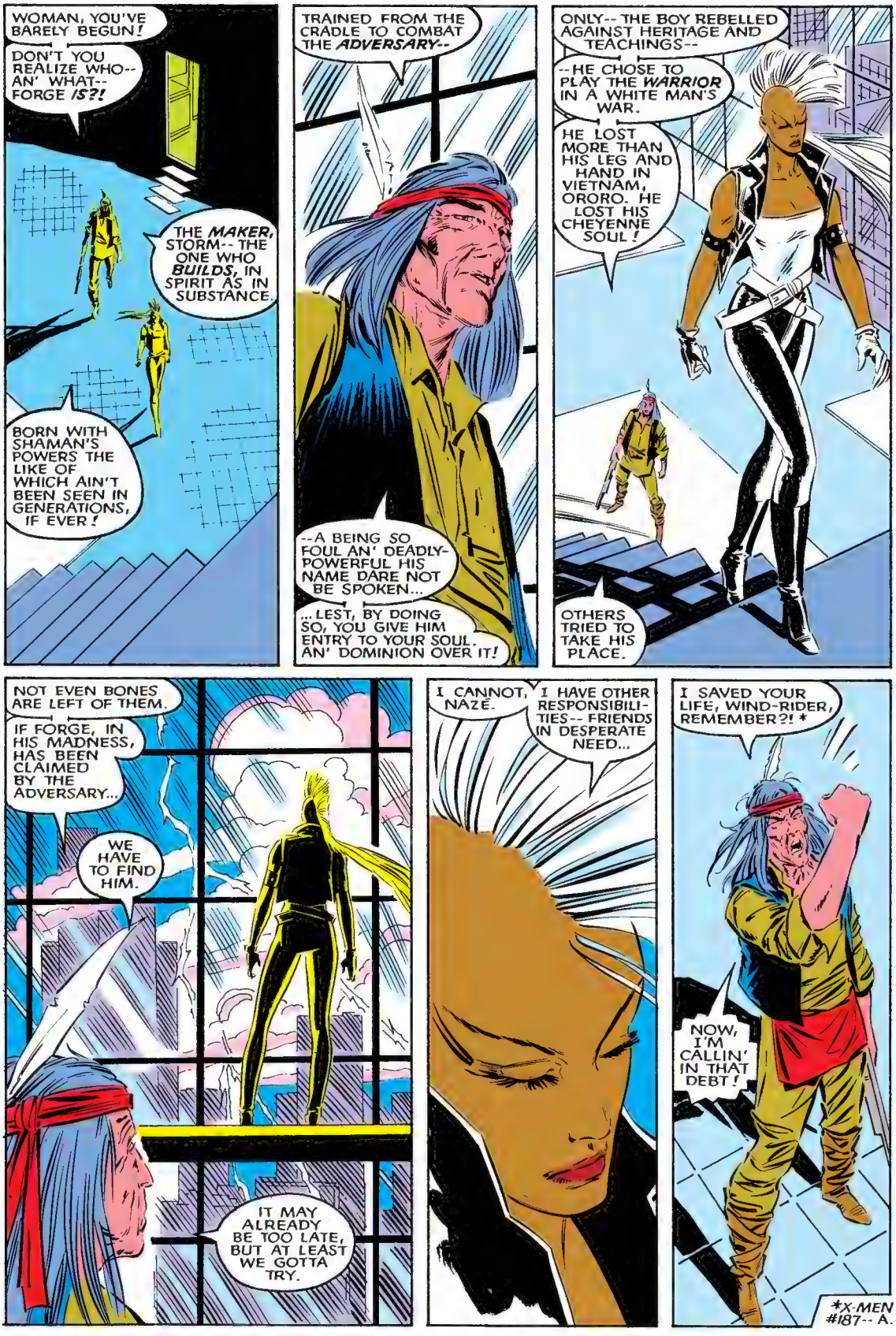

SO MUCH FOR THAT BRILLIANT IDEA.
STUN BOLT-- NUMBED MY ARM--
--LANDING ON THE SAME SHOULDER HAS NOT HELPED.
COULD BE WORSE.
THERE IS THE KITCHEN.
THE BLASTERS CANNOT REACH ME INSIDE.
I HEAR MORE VOICES.
THE COLOR-- IS IT NOT LOVELY? AND I HAVE NEVER FELT SUCH WONDERFUL FABRIC. I COULD NOT RESIST, I THOUGHT IT... I...
FORGE, WHY ARE YOU STARING?
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?
I... DO NOT KNOW. YOU MAKE ME NERVOUS.
WHY DID I SO CRAVE HIS APPROVAL?
HOW COULD HE BECOME SO IMPORTANT TO ME SO QUICKLY??
YOU'RE MEANT TO SIP IT.
TASTE GOOD?
OH.
VERY.
YOU'RE BLUSHING.
YOU ARE STARING.
SO ARE YOU.
I BLAMED THE CHAMPAGNE FOR MY FEELING GIDDY. BUT IT WAS MORE THAN THAT.
HAS THIS PLACE NOT BEEN CLEANED SINCE? IT IS A PIGSTY.
I'M PROUD OF MY HERITAGE.
BUT WHAT I WAS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WHO I AM OR THE LIFE I LEAD.
"THE PATH OF DESTINY...
"...DOESN'T ALWAYS LEAD WHERE WE WANT."
THIS COULD BE THE BOTTLE WE DRANK FROM THAT EVENING.
THE WINE IS FLAT...
...LONG AGO TURNED TO VINEGAR. LIKE US.

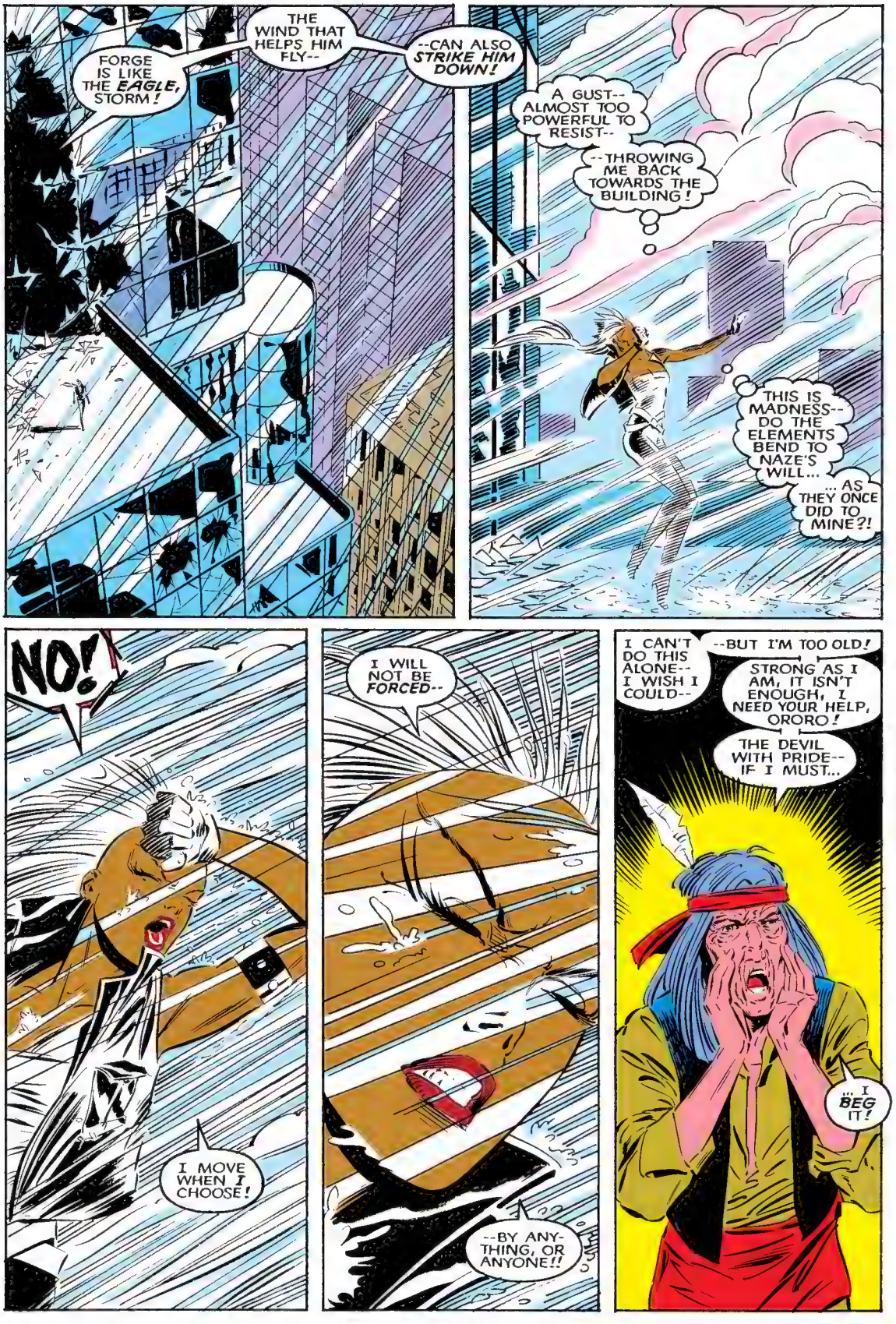

SINCE THE DEFENSES ARE CONTROLLED FROM FORGE'S LAB, THAT IS WHERE I MUST GO.
MORE ILLUSIONS.
BUT SO MANY--OVERLAPPING, BLURRING, BREAKING UP--
--LIKE A TAPE REPLAYED SO OFTEN IT IS WEARING OUT.
FORGE?
PHAUGH!
WHAT A STENCH!
COULD HE HAVE...
...DIED HERE?
MORE OF THE SAME--
-- BUT FAR WORSE THAN BEFORE.
REALITY MIXED WITH EVERY FANTASY IMAGINABLE...
...FORGE HAS MADE THIS ROOM--HIS ENTIRE HOME--
--INTO SOME OBSCENE SHRINE!
I DO NOT KNOW...
... WHETHER TO BE DISGUSTED...
...OR SAD.
THIS IS THE SWITCH I WANT.
THERE.
KLIK.
THE SHOW IS OVER.
NO!
MERCIFUL LADY!

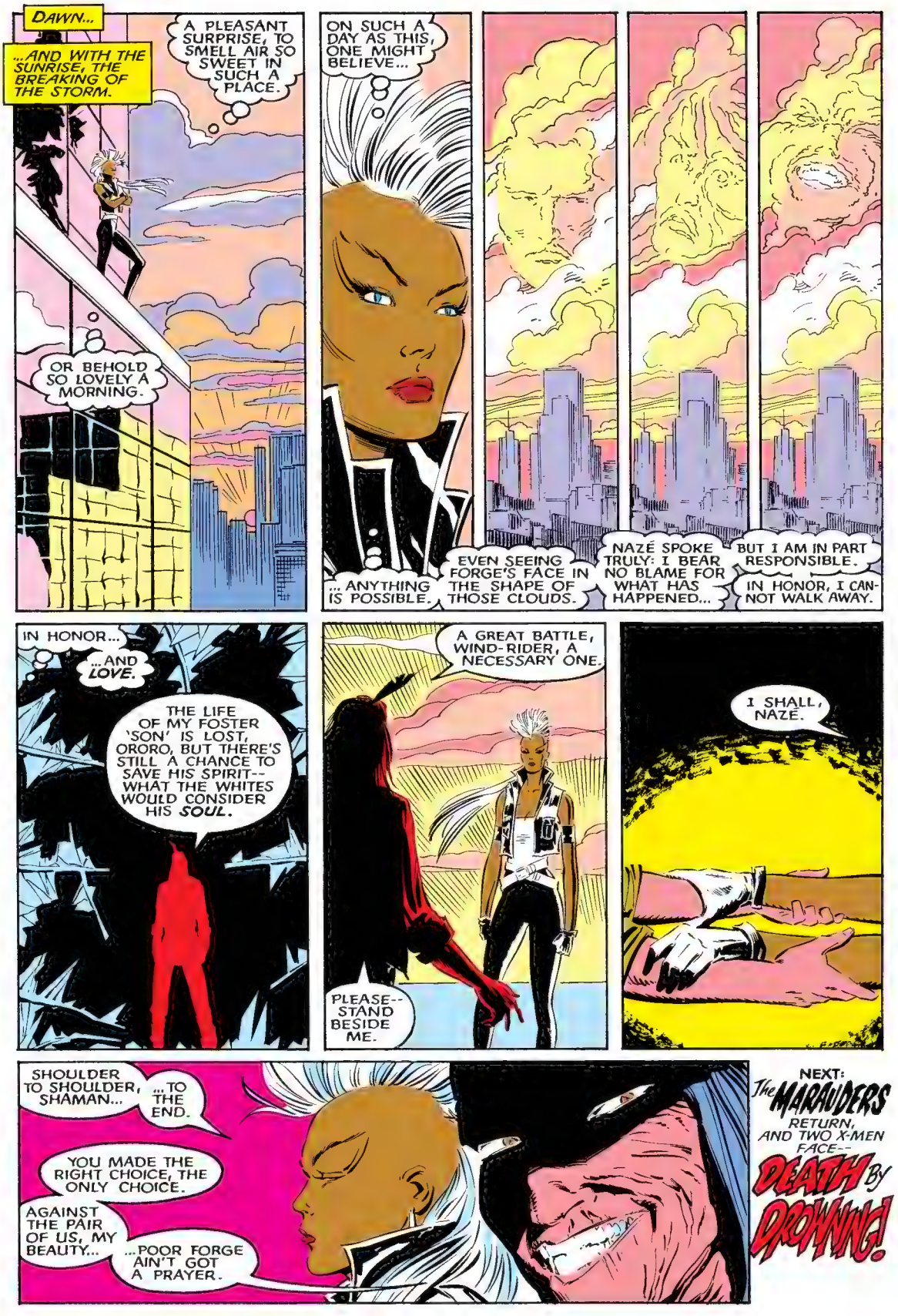

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
FORGE???
BETTER YOU HAD BEEN DEAD, O MAN...
... THAN TO BE FOUND LIKE THIS.
WHERE IS MY LOVE, WHERE IS MY HEART?!
YOU HAD NO RIGHT TO TAKE HER AWAY--
--BRING HER BACK!!
OPEN YOUR EYES, FORGE.
THE REAL WOMAN STANDS BEFORE YOU!
PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE
I BEG YOU
IS IT SO MUCH TO ASK
A LITTLE DREAM A LITTLE JOY
SHE IS MY WORLD MY LIFE
I NEED HER SO
ORORO!
HE NEITHER SEES...
...NOR HEARS ME.
THE MAN IS MAD!
BRING HER BACK, I SAY--
--OR I'LL KILL YOU!
KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, MAKER, OR--
--MY HAND?!!?
HE IS AN ILLUSION, TOO!

BEEN A WHILE, WIND-RIDER.
NAŽE!
THE SEASONS HAVE BEEN GOOD TO YOU, SHAMAN.
NO COM-PLAINTS.
LOOKIN' PRETTY JAKE YOUR-SELF.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
SAME AS YOU...
...LOOKIN' FOR MY BOY.
AT PRECISELY THE SAME TIME-- HOW COINCI-DENTAL.
ACTUALLY, I BEEN AROUND A COUPLE OF WEEKS...
...TRYIN' TO FIGURE WHERE FORGE SKIPPED TO AN' WHY AN' WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.
HAD THE WHOLE DEAL PRETTY MUCH SCOPED WHEN YOU SHOWED.
GLAD YOU CAME, STORM. SAVED ME THE TROUBLE OF CALLIN'.
YOU WERE IN THIS PLACE...
...AND CHOSE NOT TO WARN ME OF THE HOLOGRAMS AND THE ACTIVE DEFENSES?!
HARDLY. I SET 'EM ON YOU.
WANTED TO SEE IF YOU STILL HAD YOUR EDGE.
REAL IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE, CHILD, BETTER'N I EXPECTED.
THE DEVIL TAKE YOU, OLD MAN.
CAN'T TAKE...
...WHAT'S ALREADY OWNED.
REIN UP, WOMAN!
GO TO HADES!

WILL YOU LISTEN?!
I DIDN'T MONKEY WITH HIS BLAME TOYS, I JUST TURNED THEM ON!
YOU SAW FOR YOURSELF WHAT KIND OF A STATE HE WAS IN!
SO?
HIS INSANITY IS NO CONCERN OF MINE.
STUPID COW-- ARE YOU TRULY SUCH A FOOL?!
IT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH YOU!
ORORO, YOU'RE THE CAUSE!
FORGE LOVED YOU, AS HE LOVED NOTHING AND NO ONE IN HIS LIFE!
HE BELIEVED HE'D DESTROYED YOU--
--BY CREATING THE WEAPON THAT BANISHED YOUR MUTANT POWERS--
--AND THAT DESTROYED HIM!
IT TORE OUT HIS HEART, CHILD, RAVAGED HIS SOUL.
NO LESS, NAZÉ, THAN HIS BETRAYAL DID MINE!
HE COULD HAVE CHOSEN TO TELL ME THE TRUTH ABOUT HIMSELF-- BUT, INSTEAD, HE LIED! I TRUSTED HIM ONCE-- NEVER AGAIN!
YOU CAN'T BE BLAMED, ORORO--BUT YOU ALSO CAN'T DENY RESPONSI-BILITY!
QUESTION IS, WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT IT?
NOTHING. FORGE AND I ARE QUITS.
THEN WHAT BROUGHT YOU BACK?
UNFINISHED BUSINESS-- THAT IS NOW COMPLETE.
LIKE BLAZES!


WOMAN, YOU'VE BARELY BEGUN!
DON'T YOU REALIZE WHO-- AN' WHAT-- FORGE IS?!
THE MAKER, STORM-- THE ONE WHO BUILDS, IN SPIRIT AS IN SUBSTANCE.
BORN WITH SHAMAN'S POWERS THE LIKE OF WHICH AIN'T BEEN SEEN IN GENERATIONS, IF EVER!
TRAINED FROM THE CRADLE TO COMBAT THE ADVERSARY--
--A BEING SO FOUL AN' DEADLY-POWERFUL HIS NAME DARE NOT BE SPOKEN...
...LEST, BY DOING SO, YOU GIVE HIM ENTRY TO YOUR SOUL. AN' DOMINION OVER IT!
ONLY-- THE BOY REBELLED AGAINST HERITAGE AND TEACHINGS--
--HE CHOSE TO PLAY THE WARRIOR IN A WHITE MAN'S WAR.
HE LOST MORE THAN HIS LEG AND HAND IN VIETNAM, ORORO. HE LOST HIS CHEYENNE SOUL!
OTHERS TRIED TO TAKE HIS PLACE.
NOT EVEN BONES ARE LEFT OF THEM.
IF FORGE, IN HIS MADNESS, HAS BEEN CLAIMED BY THE ADVERSARY...
WE HAVE TO FIND HIM.
IT MAY ALREADY BE TOO LATE, BUT AT LEAST WE GOTTA TRY.
I CANNOT, NAZE.
I HAVE OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES-- FRIENDS IN DESPERATE NEED...
I SAVED YOUR LIFE, WIND-RIDER, REMEMBER?! *
NOW, I'M CALLIN' IN THAT DEBT!
*X-MEN #187-- A.


FORGE IS LIKE THE EAGLE, STORM!
THE WIND THAT HELPS HIM FLY--
--CAN ALSO STRIKE HIM DOWN!
A GUST-- ALMOST TOO POWERFUL TO RESIST--
--THROWING ME BACK TOWARDS THE BUILDING!
THIS IS MADNESS-- DO THE ELEMENTS BEND TO NAZE'S WILL...
... AS THEY ONCE DID TO MINE?!
NO!
I MOVE WHEN I CHOOSE!
I WILL NOT BE FORCED--
--BY ANY-THING, OR ANYONE!!
I CAN'T DO THIS ALONE-- I WISH I COULD--
--BUT I'M TOO OLD!
STRONG AS I AM, IT ISN'T ENOUGH, I NEED YOUR HELP, ORORO!
THE DEVIL WITH PRIDE-- IF I MUST...
... I BEG IT!


DAWN...
...AND WITH THE SUNRISE, THE BREAKING OF THE STORM.
A PLEASANT SURPRISE, TO SMELL AIR SO SWEET IN SUCH A PLACE.
OR BEHOLD SO LOVELY A MORNING.
ON SUCH A DAY AS THIS, ONE MIGHT BELIEVE...
... ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.
EVEN SEEING FORGE'S FACE IN THE SHAPE OF THOSE CLOUDS.
NAZÉ SPOKE TRULY: I BEAR NO BLAME FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED...
BUT I AM IN PART RESPONSIBLE.
IN HONOR, I CANNOT WALK AWAY.
IN HONOR...
...AND LOVE.
THE LIFE OF MY FOSTER 'SON' IS LOST, ORORO, BUT THERE'S STILL A CHANCE TO SAVE HIS SPIRIT--WHAT THE WHITES WOULD CONSIDER HIS SOUL.
A GREAT BATTLE, WIND-RIDER, A NECESSARY ONE.
PLEASE--STAND BESIDE ME.
I SHALL, NAZE.
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER, SHAMAN...
...TO THE END.
YOU MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE, THE ONLY CHOICE.
AGAINST THE PAIR OF US, MY BEAUTY...
...POOR FORGE AIN'T GOT A PRAYER.
NEXT: The MARAUDERS RETURN, AND TWO X-MEN FACE-- DEATH BY DROWNING!

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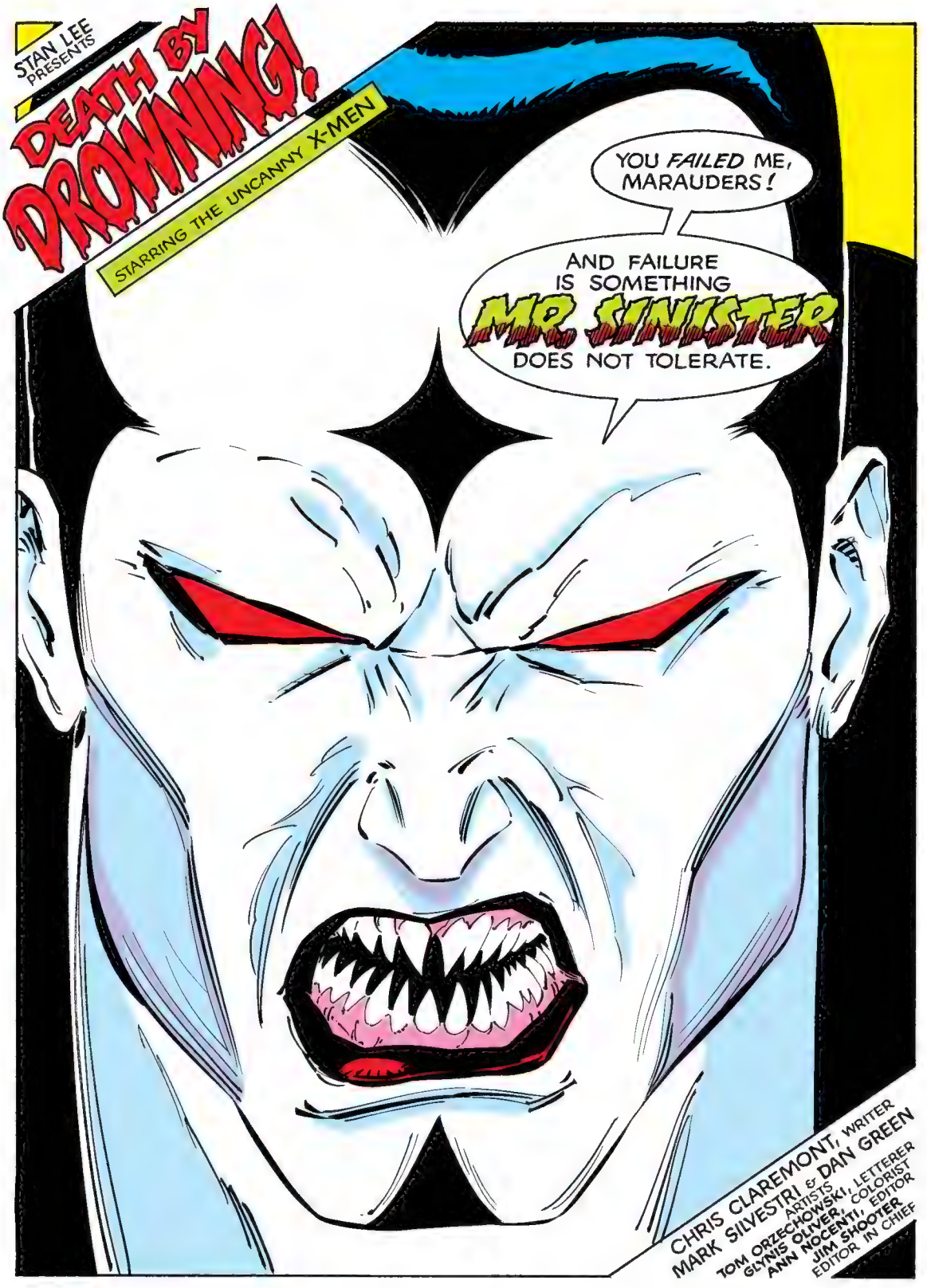
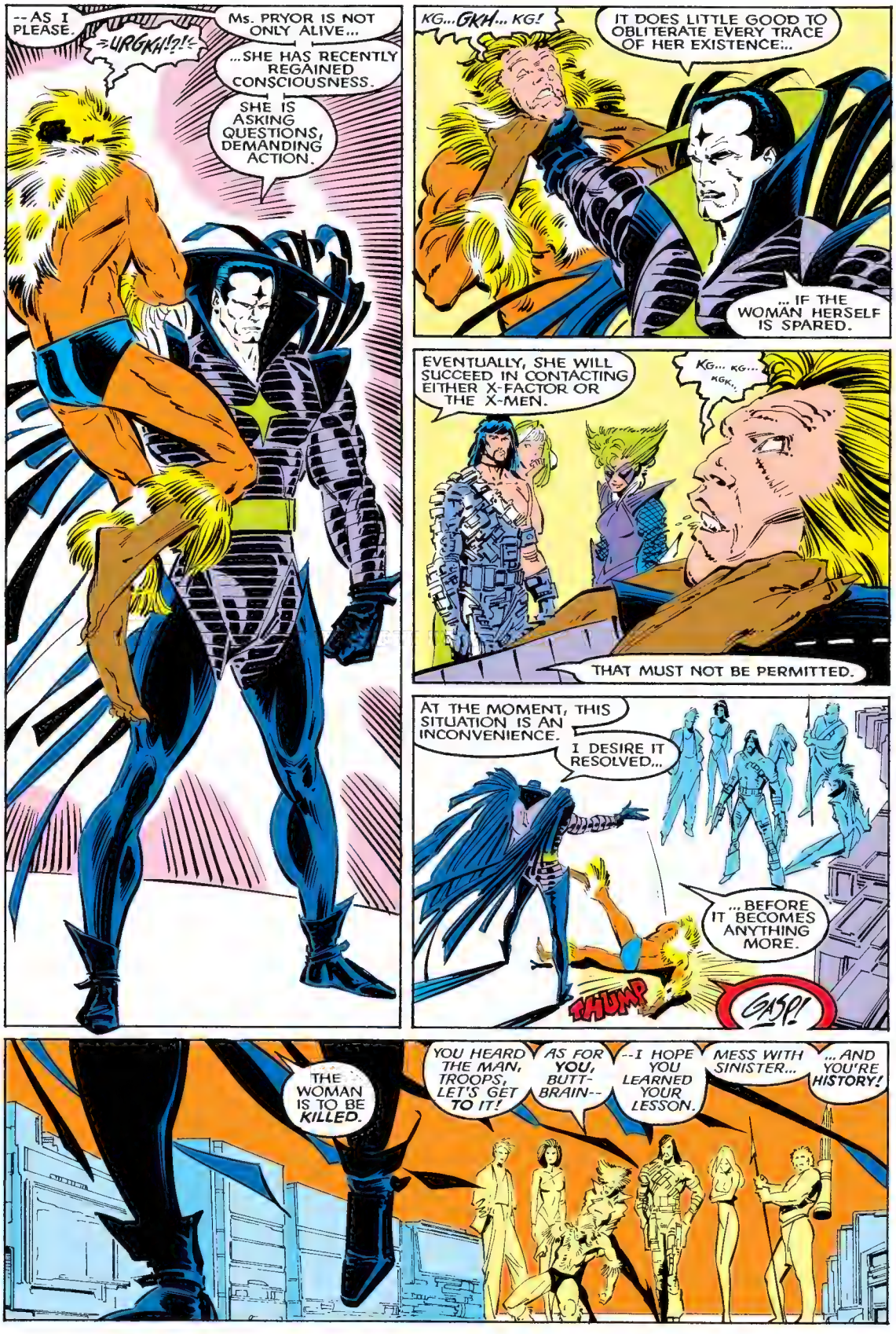
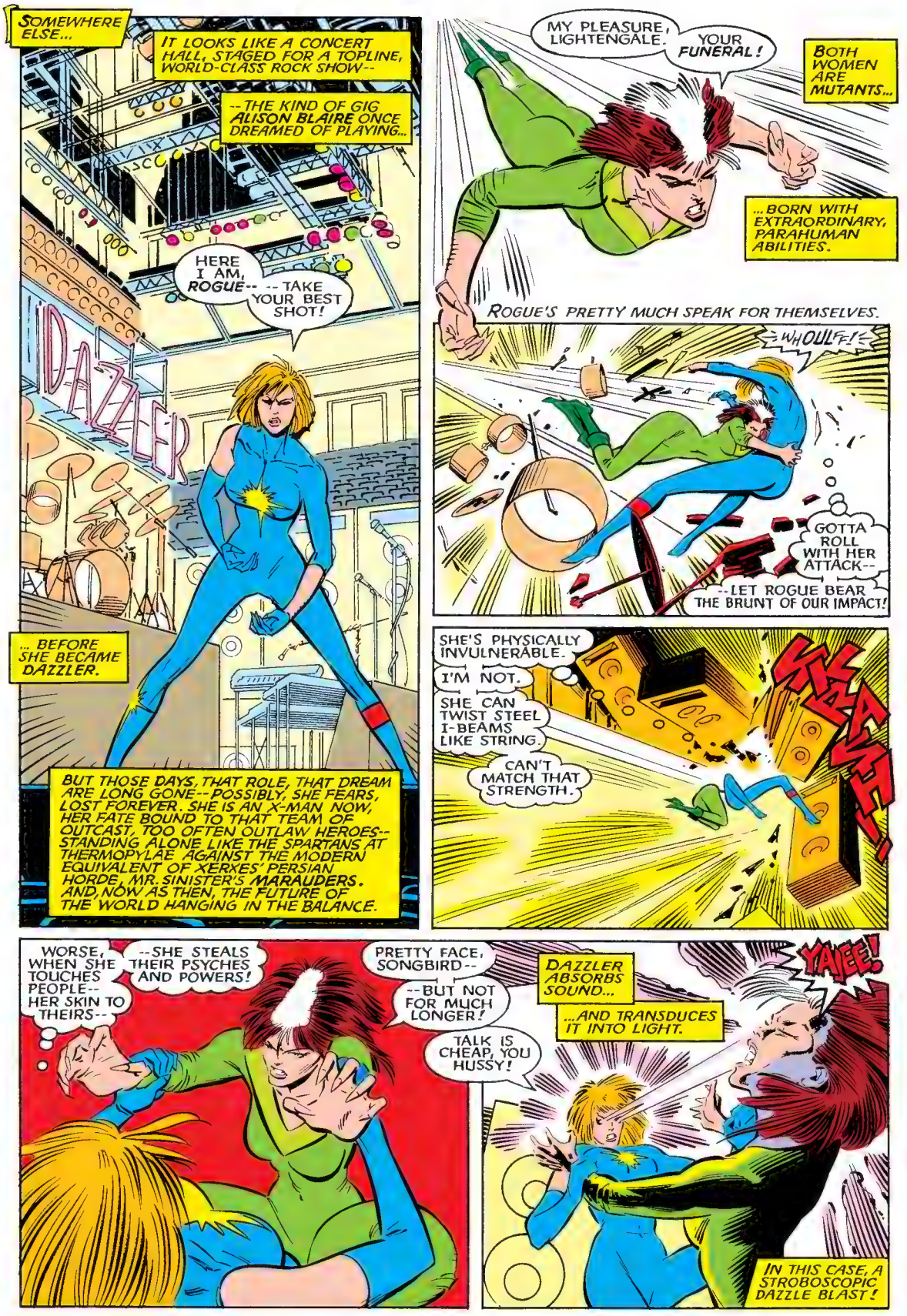
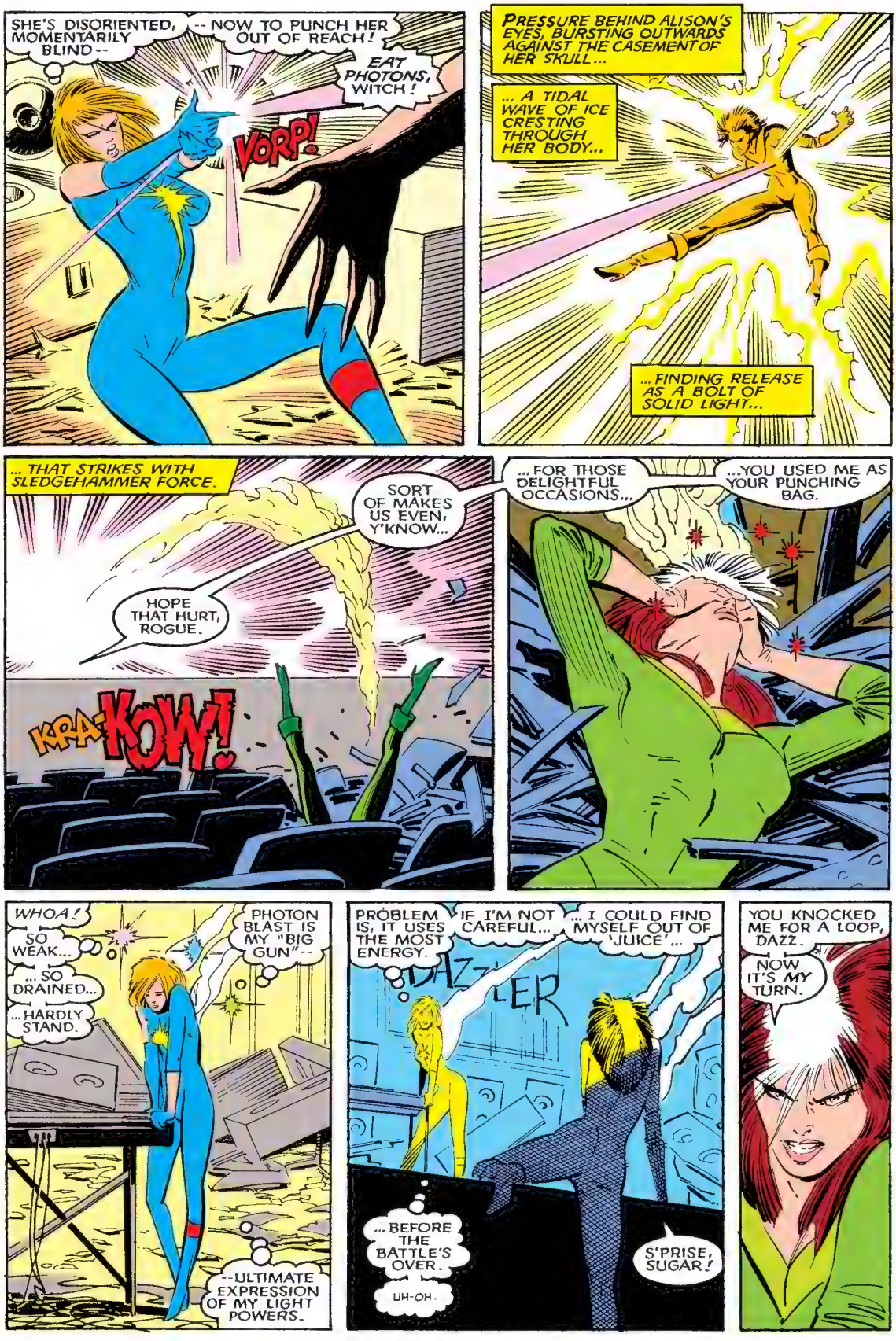
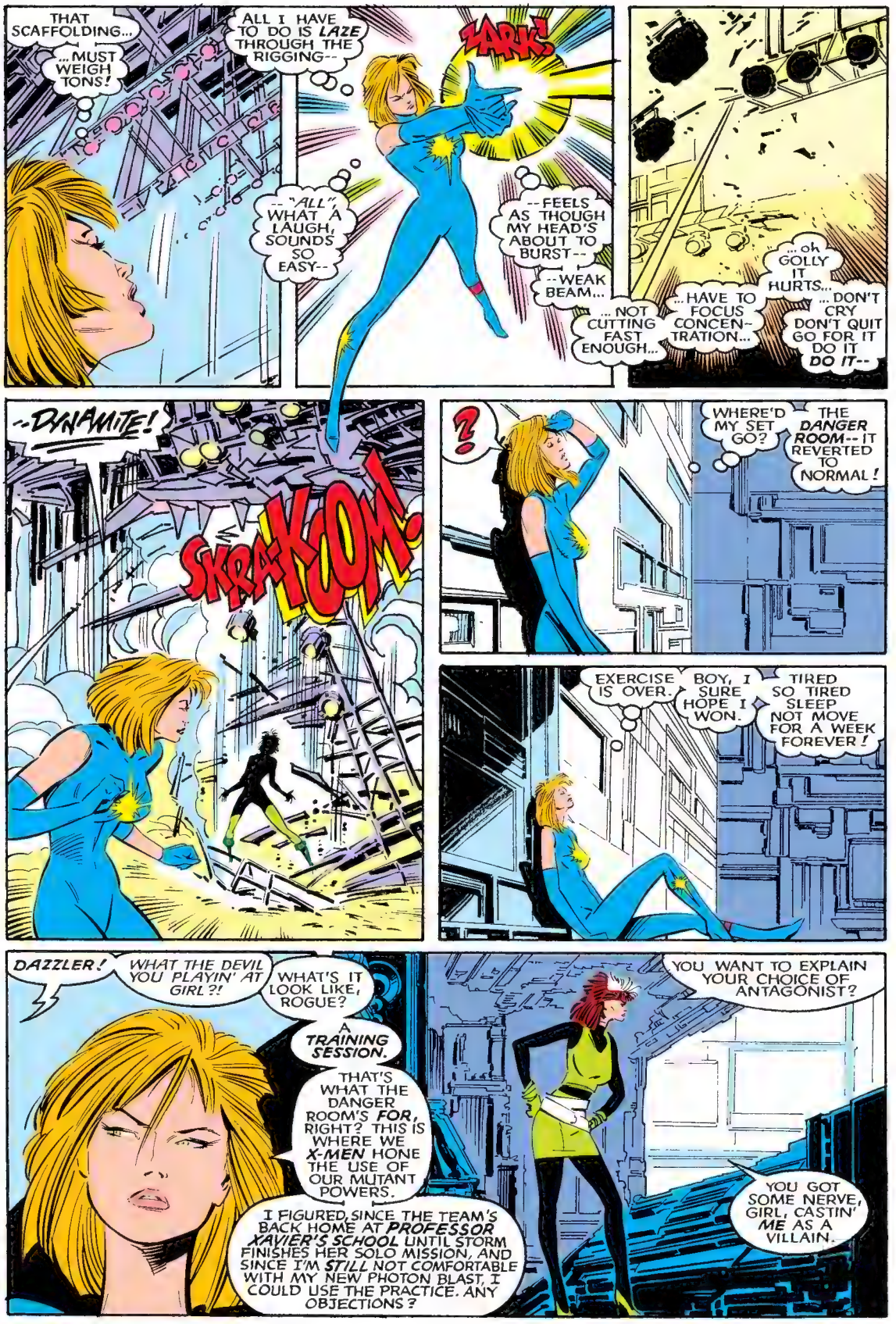

STAN LEE PRESENTS
DEATH BY DROWNING!
STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
YOU FAILED ME, MARAUDERS!
AND FAILURE IS SOMETHING MR. SINISTER DOES NOT TOLERATE.
CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER
MARK SILVESTRI & DAN GREEN ARTISTS
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST
ANN NOCENTI, EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER, EDITOR IN CHIEF

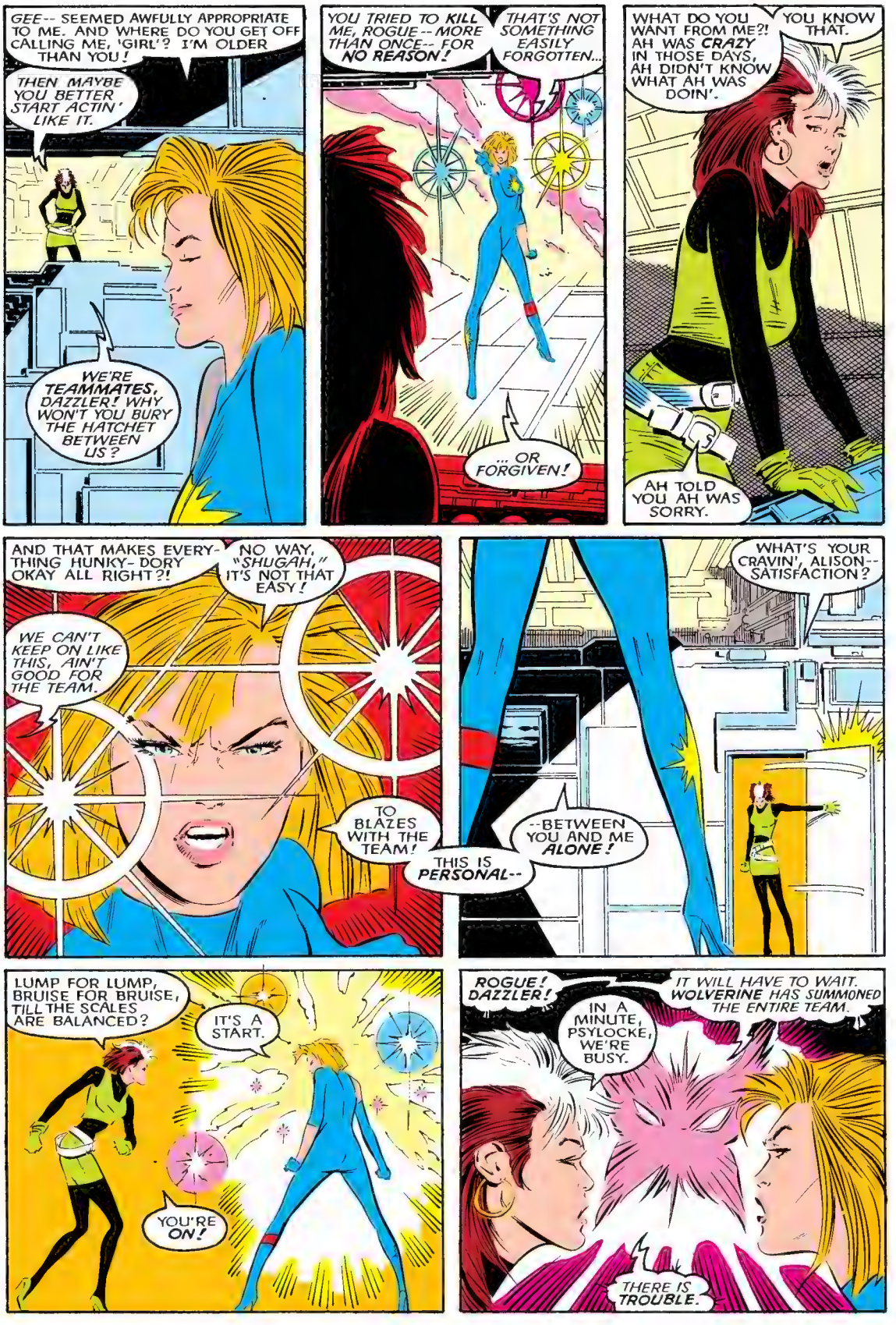
SCRAMBLER.
ARCLIGHT.
SCALPHUNTER.
VERTIGO.
HARPOON.
POLARIS.
SABRE-TOOTH.
I FORGE YOU INTO ONE OF THE DEADLIEST FIGHTING FORCES THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN.
I OFFER POWER BEYOND IMAGINATION...
...WEALTH BEYOND THE WILDEST DREAMS OF AVARICE--
-- IF ONLY YOU SERVE ME, AND DO SO WELL.
YET-- WHEN I SET THE SIMPLEST OF TASKS--
--THE EXECUTION OF THIS WOMAN, MADELYNE PRYOR...
...YOU BOTCH IT.
HOW THEN CAN I EXPECT YOU TO FARE AGAINST SUCH HEROES AS THE AVENGERS OR THE FANTASTIC FOUR--OR OUR MOST DANGEROUS FOES, WHO TIME AND AGAIN YOU HAVE FAILED TO ELIMINATE, THE X-MEN?
SHALL I TEAR THE HEART FROM ONE OF YOU...
...AS A SIGN OF MY DISPLEASURE?
NOT IF I TAKE YOURS FIRST, BUB!
NOBODY TALKS TO SABRETOOTH LIKE THAT--
--AN' NOBODY THREATENS HIM!
I WILL TALK, LITTLE MAN-- AND DO--

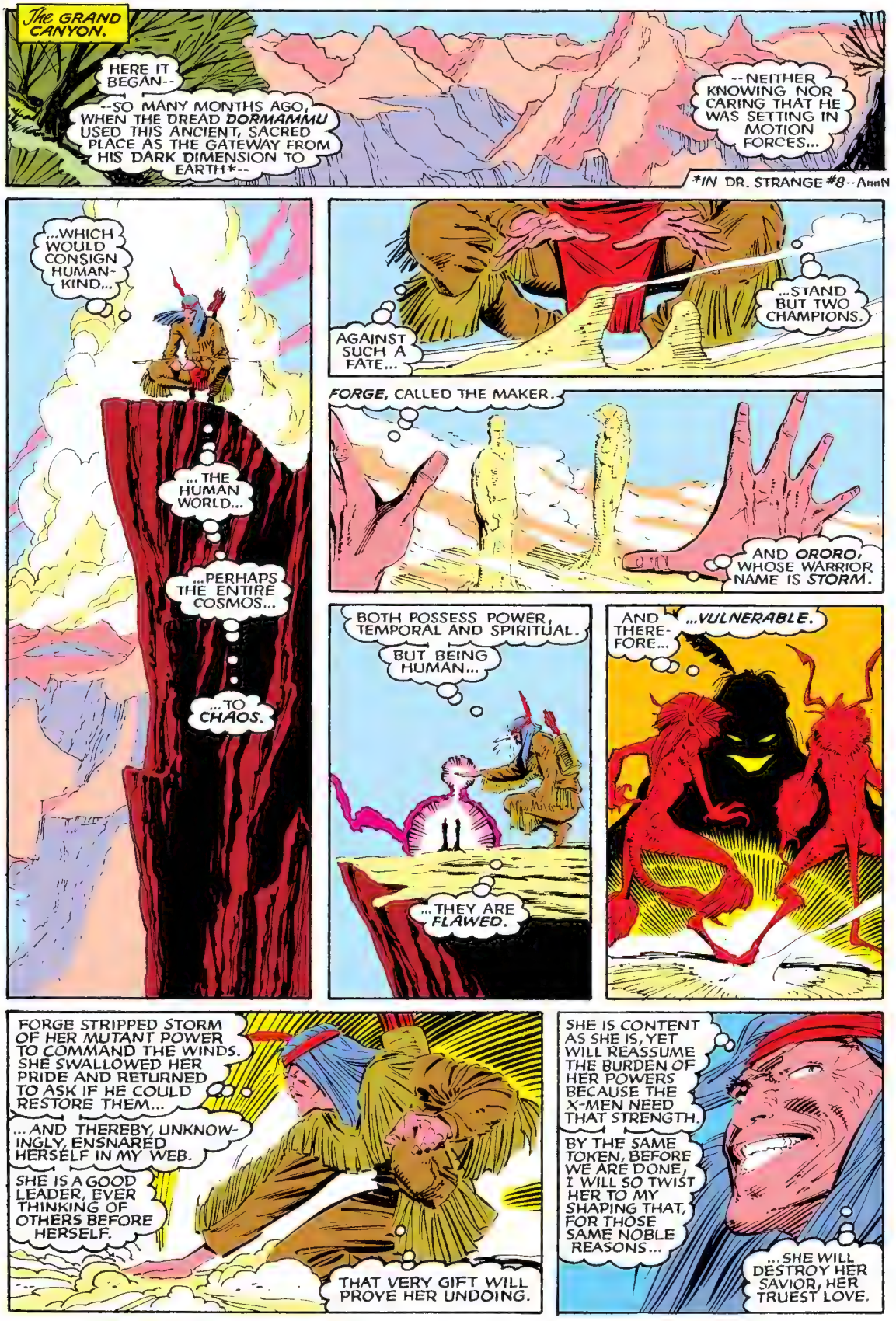

--AS I PLEASE.
URGKH!?!
Ms. PRYOR IS NOT ONLY ALIVE...
...SHE HAS RECENTLY REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.
SHE IS ASKING QUESTIONS, DEMANDING ACTION.
KG...GKH... KG!
IT DOES LITTLE GOOD TO OBLITERATE EVERY TRACE OF HER EXISTENCE...
... IF THE WOMAN HERSELF IS SPARED.
EVENTUALLY, SHE WILL SUCCEED IN CONTACTING EITHER X-FACTOR OR THE X-MEN.
KG... KG... KGK...
THAT MUST NOT BE PERMITTED.
AT THE MOMENT, THIS SITUATION IS AN INCONVENIENCE.
I DESIRE IT RESOLVED...
...BEFORE IT BECOMES ANYTHING MORE.
THUMP
GASP!
THE WOMAN IS TO BE KILLED.
YOU HEARD THE MAN, TROOPS, LET'S GET TO IT!
AS FOR YOU, BUTT-BRAIN--
--I HOPE YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSON.
MESS WITH SINISTER...
...AND YOU'RE HISTORY!

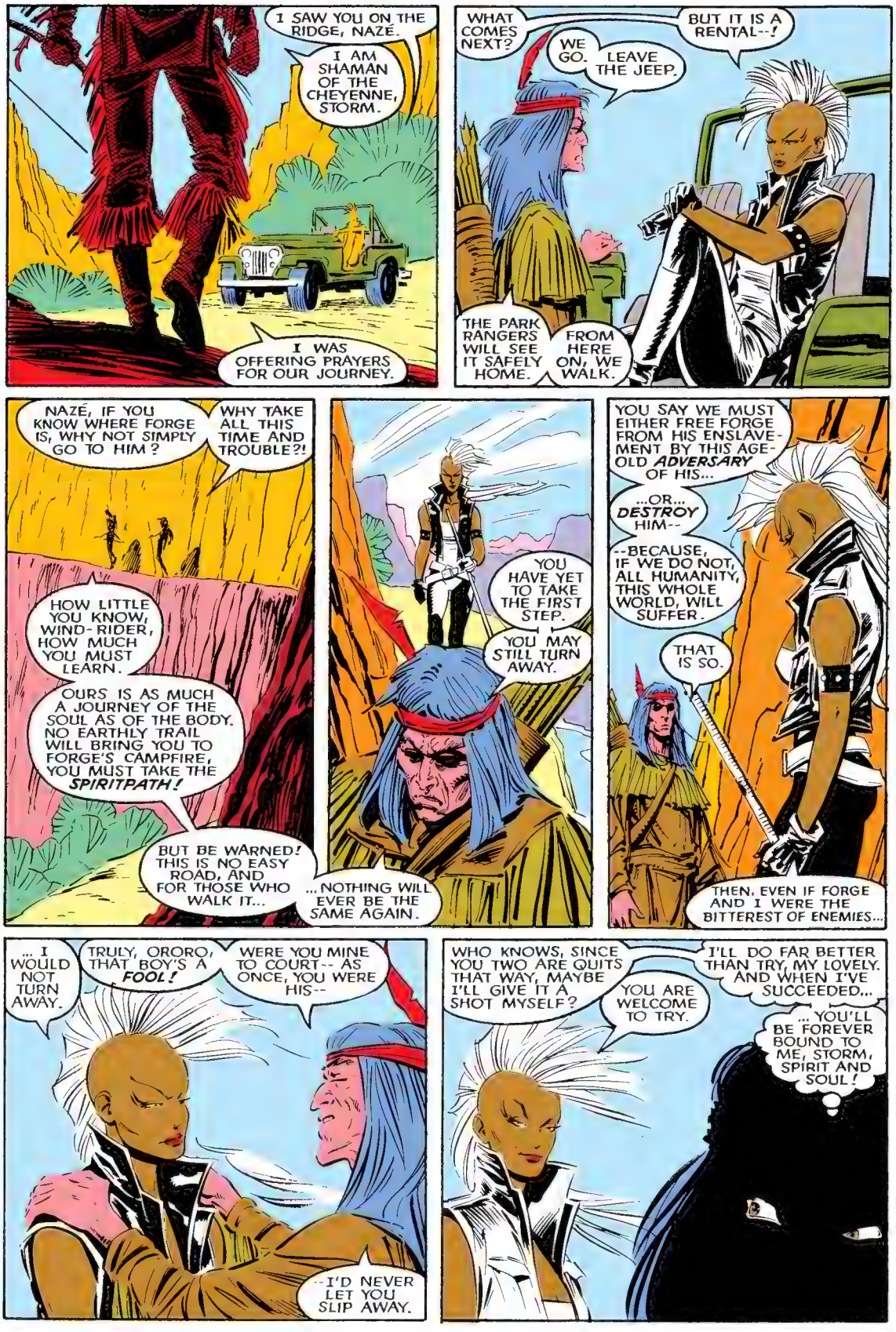

SOMEWHERE ELSE...
IT LOOKS LIKE A CONCERT HALL, STAGED FOR A TOPLINE, WORLD-CLASS ROCK SHOW--
--THE KIND OF GIG ALISON BLAIRE ONCE DREAMED OF PLAYING...
HERE I AM, ROGUE--
--TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT!
DAZZLER
... BEFORE SHE BECAME DAZZLER.
BUT THOSE DAYS, THAT ROLE, THAT DREAM ARE LONG GONE--POSSIBLY, SHE FEARS, LOST FOREVER. SHE IS AN X-MAN NOW, HER FATE BOUND TO THAT TEAM OF OUTCAST, TOO OFTEN OUTLAW HEROES--STANDING ALONE LIKE THE SPARTANS AT THERMOPYLAE AGAINST THE MODERN EQUIVALENT OF XERXES' PERSIAN HORDE, MR. SINISTER'S MARAUDERS. AND, NOW AS THEN, THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD HANGING IN THE BALANCE.
MY PLEASURE, LIGHTENGALE.
YOUR FUNERAL!
BOTH WOMEN ARE MUTANTS...
...BORN WITH EXTRAORDINARY, PARAHUMAN ABILITIES.
ROGUE'S PRETTY MUCH SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.
WHOUFF!
GOTTA ROLL WITH HER ATTACK--
--LET ROGUE BEAR THE BRUNT OF OUR IMPACT!
SHE'S PHYSICALLY INVULNERABLE.
I'M NOT.
SHE CAN TWIST STEEL I-BEAMS LIKE STRING.
CAN'T MATCH THAT STRENGTH.
KRAKK!
WORSE, WHEN SHE TOUCHES PEOPLE--HER SKIN TO THEIRS--
--SHE STEALS THEIR PSYCHES AND POWERS!
PRETTY FACE, SONGBIRD--
--BUT NOT FOR MUCH LONGER!
TALK IS CHEAP, YOU HUSSY!
DAZZLER ABSORBS SOUND...
...AND TRANSDUCES IT INTO LIGHT.
YAIEE!
IN THIS CASE, A STROBOSCOPIC DAZZLE BLAST!

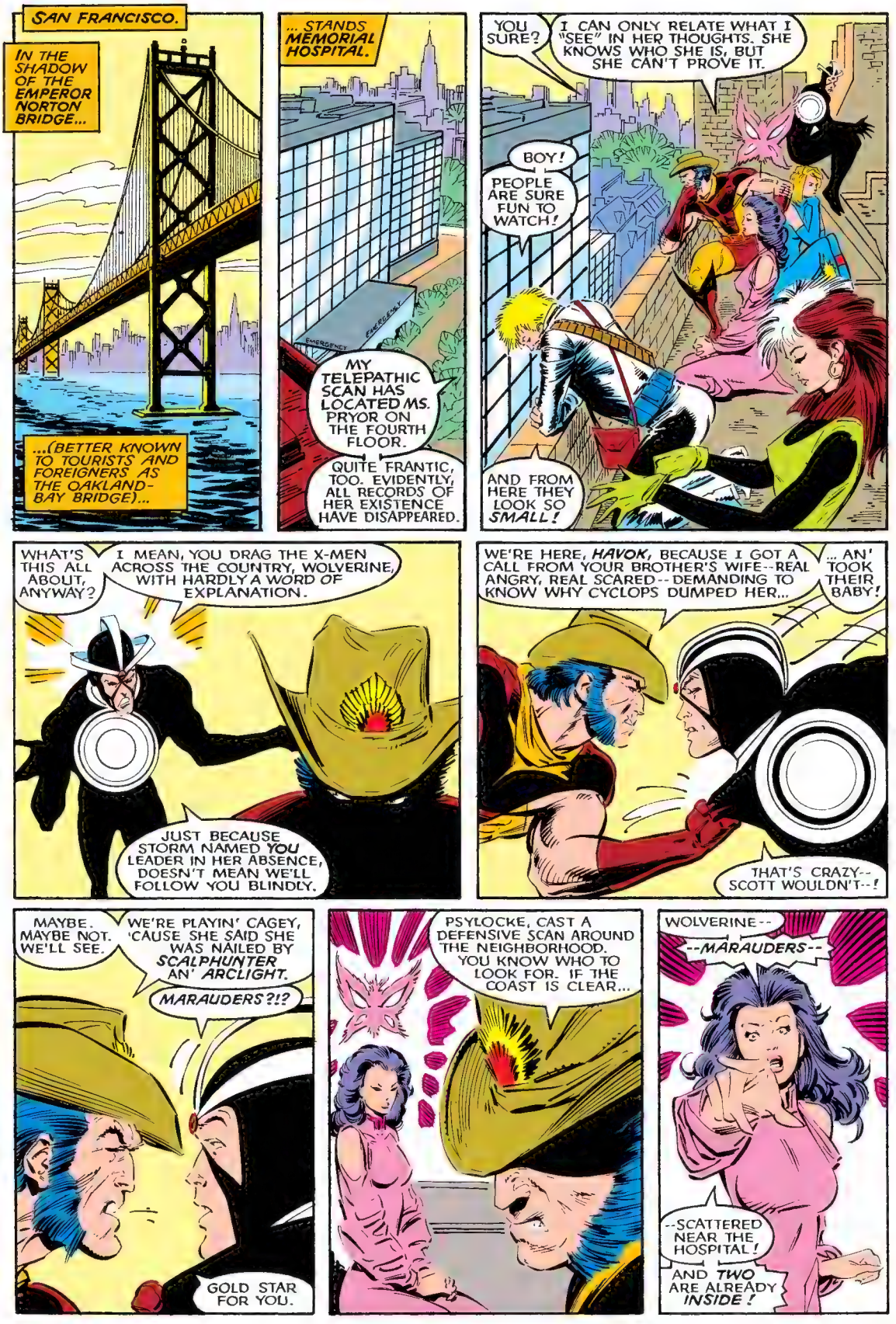

SHE'S DISORIENTED, MOMENTARILY BLIND--
-- NOW TO PUNCH HER OUT OF REACH!
EAT PHOTONS, WITCH!
VORP!
PRESSURE BEHIND ALISON'S EYES, BURSTING OUTWARDS AGAINST THE CASEMENT OF HER SKULL...
... A TIDAL WAVE OF ICE CRESTING THROUGH HER BODY...
... FINDING RELEASE AS A BOLT OF SOLID LIGHT...
... THAT STRIKES WITH SLEDGEHAMMER FORCE.
SORT OF MAKES US EVEN, Y'KNOW...
HOPE THAT HURT, ROGUE.
KRA-KOW!
... FOR THOSE DELIGHTFUL OCCASIONS...
...YOU USED ME AS YOUR PUNCHING BAG.
WHOA!
SO WEAK...
... SO DRAINED...
...HARDLY STAND.
PHOTON BLAST IS MY "BIG GUN"--
--ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF MY LIGHT POWERS.
PROBLEM IS, IT USES THE MOST ENERGY.
IF I'M NOT CAREFUL...
... I COULD FIND MYSELF OUT OF 'JUICE'...
DAZZLER
... BEFORE THE BATTLE'S OVER.
UH-OH.
S'PRISE, SUGAR!
YOU KNOCKED ME FOR A LOOP, DAZZ.
NOW IT'S MY TURN.

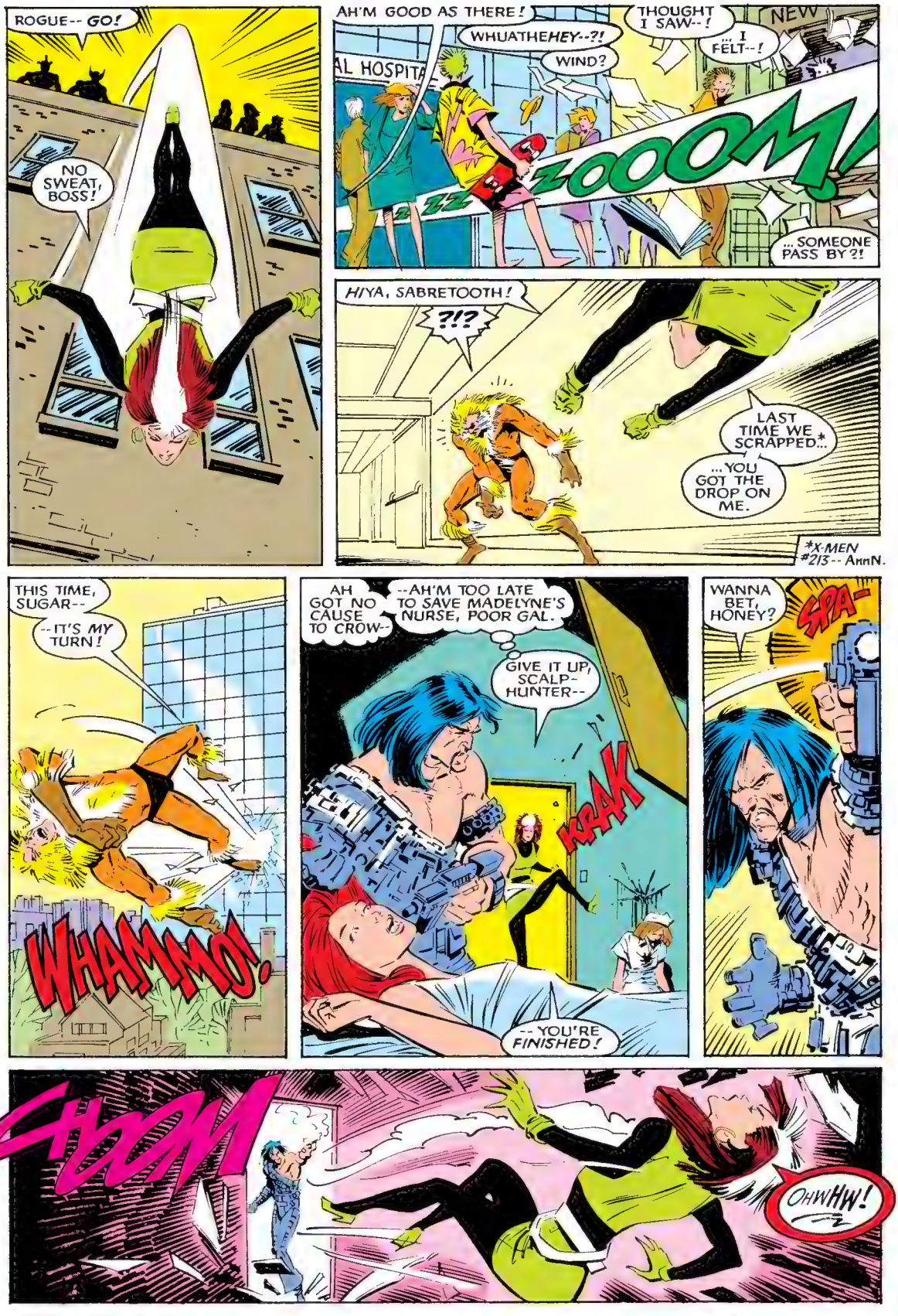

THAT SCAFFOLDING...
...MUST WEIGH TONS!
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS LAZE THROUGH THE RIGGING--
ZARK!
--"ALL", WHAT A LAUGH, SOUNDS SO EASY--
--FEELS AS THOUGH MY HEAD'S ABOUT TO BURST--
--WEAK BEAM...
...NOT CUTTING FAST ENOUGH...
...HAVE TO FOCUS CONCEN-TRATION...
...oh GOLLY IT HURTS...
...DON'T CRY DON'T QUIT GO FOR IT DO IT DO IT--
--DYNAMITE!
SKRAKOOM!
?
WHERE'D MY SET GO?
THE DANGER ROOM-- IT REVERTED TO NORMAL!
EXERCISE IS OVER.
BOY, I SURE HOPE I WON.
TIRED SO TIRED SLEEP NOT MOVE FOR A WEEK FOREVER!
DAZZLER!
WHAT THE DEVIL YOU PLAYIN' AT GIRL?!
WHAT'S IT LOOK LIKE, ROGUE?
A TRAINING SESSION.
THAT'S WHAT THE DANGER ROOM'S FOR, RIGHT? THIS IS WHERE WE X-MEN HONE THE USE OF OUR MUTANT POWERS.
I FIGURED, SINCE THE TEAM'S BACK HOME AT PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL UNTIL STORM FINISHES HER SOLO MISSION, AND SINCE I'M STILL NOT COMFORTABLE WITH MY NEW PHOTON BLAST, I COULD USE THE PRACTICE. ANY OBJECTIONS?
YOU WANT TO EXPLAIN YOUR CHOICE OF ANTAGONIST?
YOU GOT SOME NERVE, GIRL, CASTIN' ME AS A VILLAIN.

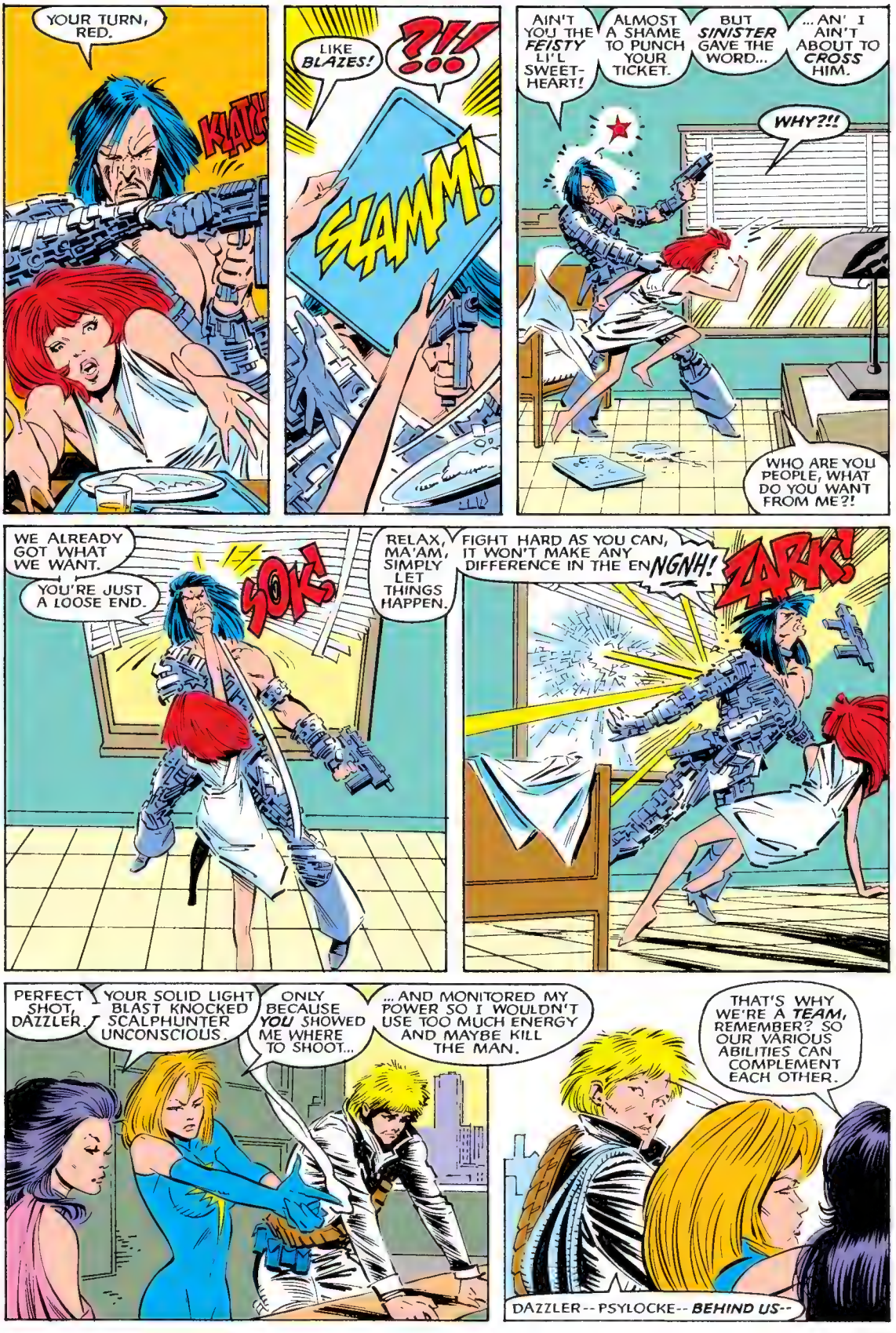

GEE-- SEEMED AWFULLY APPROPRIATE TO ME. AND WHERE DO YOU GET OFF CALLING ME, 'GIRL'? I'M OLDER THAN YOU!
THEN MAYBE YOU BETTER START ACTIN' LIKE IT.
WE'RE TEAMMATES, DAZZLER! WHY WON'T YOU BURY THE HATCHET BETWEEN US?
YOU TRIED TO KILL ME, ROGUE-- MORE THAN ONCE-- FOR NO REASON!
THAT'S NOT SOMETHING EASILY FORGOTTEN...
... OR FORGIVEN!
WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?! AH WAS CRAZY IN THOSE DAYS, AH DIDN'T KNOW WHAT AH WAS DOIN'.
YOU KNOW THAT.
AH TOLD YOU AH WAS SORRY.
AND THAT MAKES EVERY-THING HUNKY-DORY OKAY ALL RIGHT?!
NO WAY, "SHUGAH," IT'S NOT THAT EASY!
WE CAN'T KEEP ON LIKE THIS, AIN'T GOOD FOR THE TEAM.
TO BLAZES WITH THE TEAM!
THIS IS PERSONAL--
--BETWEEN YOU AND ME ALONE!
WHAT'S YOUR CRAVIN', ALISON-- SATISFACTION?
LUMP FOR LUMP, BRUISE FOR BRUISE, TILL THE SCALES ARE BALANCED?
IT'S A START.
YOU'RE ON!
ROGUE! DAZZLER!
IN A MINUTE, PSYLOCKE, WE'RE BUSY.
IT WILL HAVE TO WAIT. WOLVERINE HAS SUMMONED THE ENTIRE TEAM.
THERE IS TROUBLE.

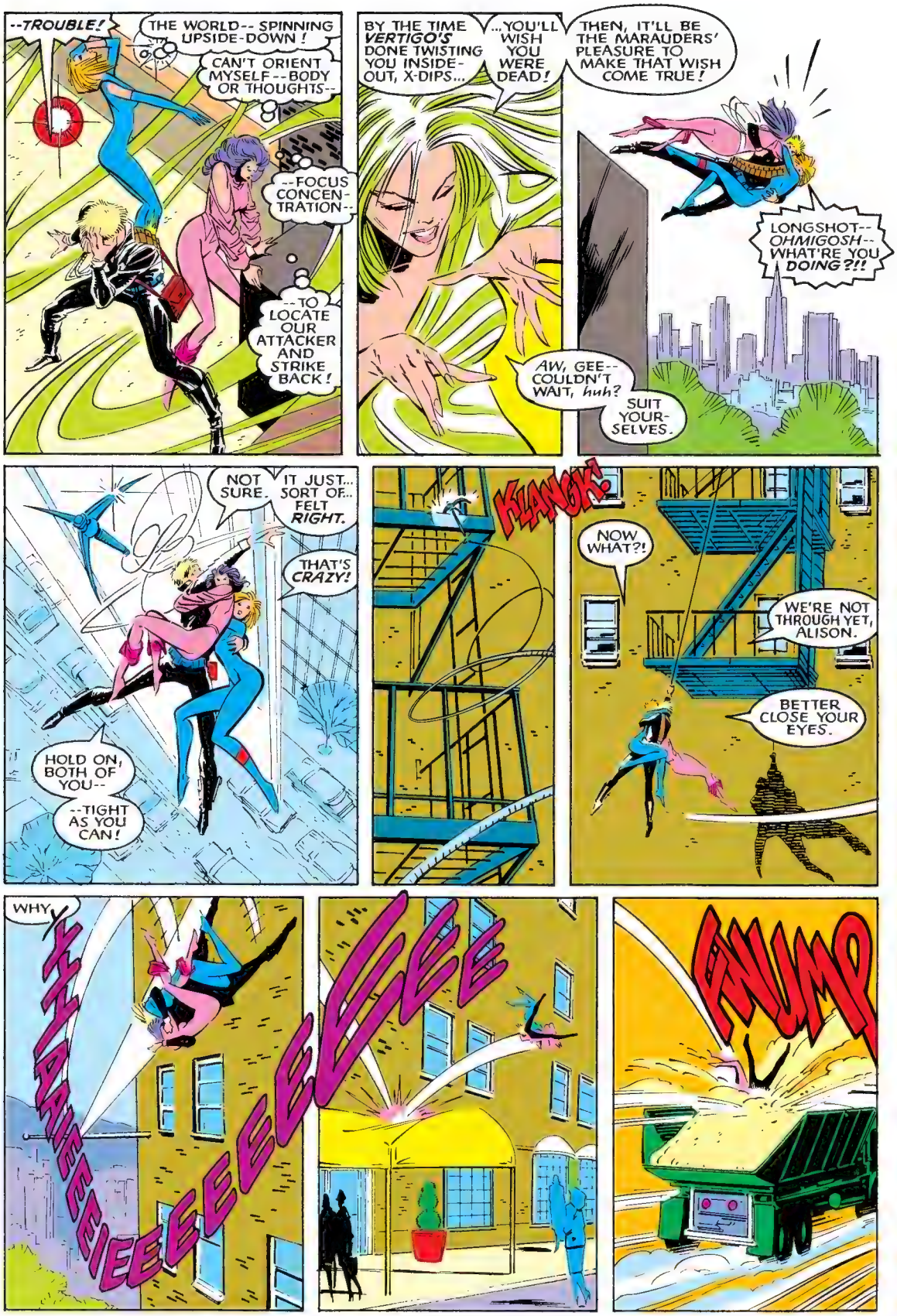

THE GRAND CANYON.
HERE IT BEGAN--
--SO MANY MONTHS AGO, WHEN THE DREAD DORMAMMU USED THIS ANCIENT, SACRED PLACE AS THE GATEWAY FROM HIS DARK DIMENSION TO EARTH*--
--NEITHER KNOWING NOR CARING THAT HE WAS SETTING IN MOTION FORCES...
*IN DR. STRANGE #8--AnnN
...WHICH WOULD CONSIGN HUMAN-KIND...
...THE HUMAN WORLD...
...PERHAPS THE ENTIRE COSMOS...
...TO CHAOS.
AGAINST SUCH A FATE...
...STAND BUT TWO CHAMPIONS.
FORGE, CALLED THE MAKER.
AND ORORO, WHOSE WARRIOR NAME IS STORM.
BOTH POSSESS POWER, TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL.
BUT BEING HUMAN...
...THEY ARE FLAWED.
AND THERE-FORE...
...VULNERABLE.
FORGE STRIPPED STORM OF HER MUTANT POWER TO COMMAND THE WINDS. SHE SWALLOWED HER PRIDE AND RETURNED TO ASK IF HE COULD RESTORE THEM...
... AND THEREBY, UNKNOW-INGLY, ENSNARED HERSELF IN MY WEB.
SHE IS A GOOD LEADER, EVER THINKING OF OTHERS BEFORE HERSELF.
THAT VERY GIFT WILL PROVE HER UNDOING.
SHE IS CONTENT AS SHE IS, YET WILL REASSUME THE BURDEN OF HER POWERS BECAUSE THE X-MEN NEED THAT STRENGTH.
BY THE SAME TOKEN, BEFORE WE ARE DONE, I WILL SO TWIST HER TO MY SHAPING THAT, FOR THOSE SAME NOBLE REASONS...
...SHE WILL DESTROY HER SAVIOR, HER TRUEST LOVE.

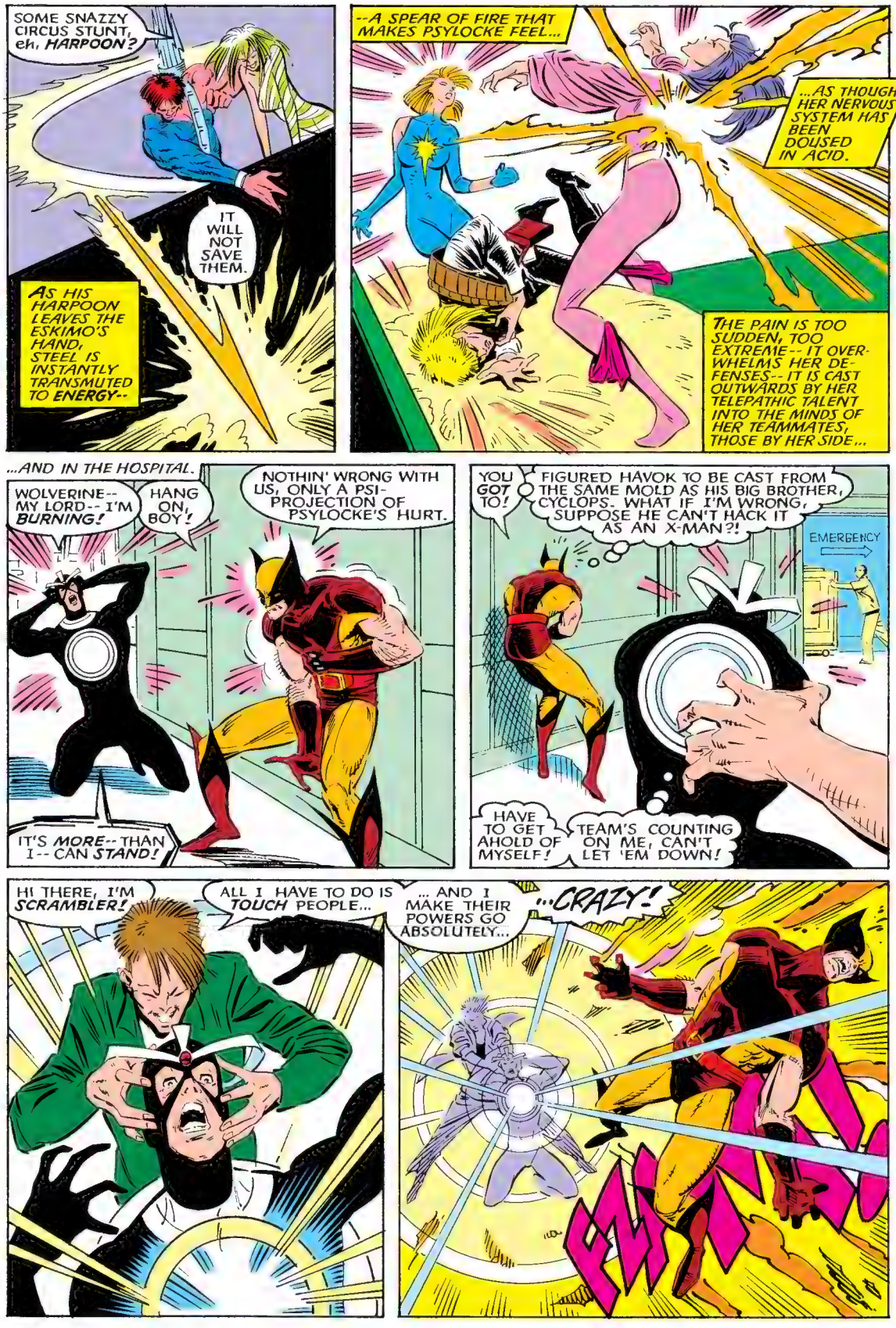

I SAW YOU ON THE RIDGE, NAZÉ.
I AM SHAMAN OF THE CHEYENNE, STORM.
I WAS OFFERING PRAYERS FOR OUR JOURNEY.
WHAT COMES NEXT?
WE GO. LEAVE THE JEEP.
BUT IT IS A RENTAL--!
THE PARK RANGERS WILL SEE IT SAFELY HOME.
FROM HERE ON, WE WALK.
NAZÉ, IF YOU KNOW WHERE FORGE IS, WHY NOT SIMPLY GO TO HIM?
WHY TAKE ALL THIS TIME AND TROUBLE?!
HOW LITTLE YOU KNOW, WIND-RIDER, HOW MUCH YOU MUST LEARN.
OURS IS AS MUCH A JOURNEY OF THE SOUL AS OF THE BODY. NO EARTHLY TRAIL WILL BRING YOU TO FORGE'S CAMPFIRE, YOU MUST TAKE THE SPIRITPATH!
BUT BE WARNED! THIS IS NO EASY ROAD, AND FOR THOSE WHO WALK IT...
YOU HAVE YET TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP.
YOU MAY STILL TURN AWAY.
...NOTHING WILL EVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.
YOU SAY WE MUST EITHER FREE FORGE FROM HIS ENSLAVEMENT BY THIS AGE-OLD ADVERSARY OF HIS...
...OR... DESTROY HIM--
--BECAUSE, IF WE DO NOT, ALL HUMANITY, THIS WHOLE WORLD, WILL SUFFER.
THAT IS SO.
THEN, EVEN IF FORGE AND I WERE THE BITTEREST OF ENEMIES...
...I WOULD NOT TURN AWAY.
TRULY, ORORO, THAT BOY'S A FOOL!
WERE YOU MINE TO COURT-- AS ONCE, YOU WERE HIS--
--I'D NEVER LET YOU SLIP AWAY.
WHO KNOWS, SINCE YOU TWO ARE QUITS THAT WAY, MAYBE I'LL GIVE IT A SHOT MYSELF?
YOU ARE WELCOME TO TRY.
I'LL DO FAR BETTER THAN TRY, MY LOVELY. AND WHEN I'VE SUCCEEDED...
...YOU'LL BE FOREVER BOUND TO ME, STORM, SPIRIT AND SOUL!

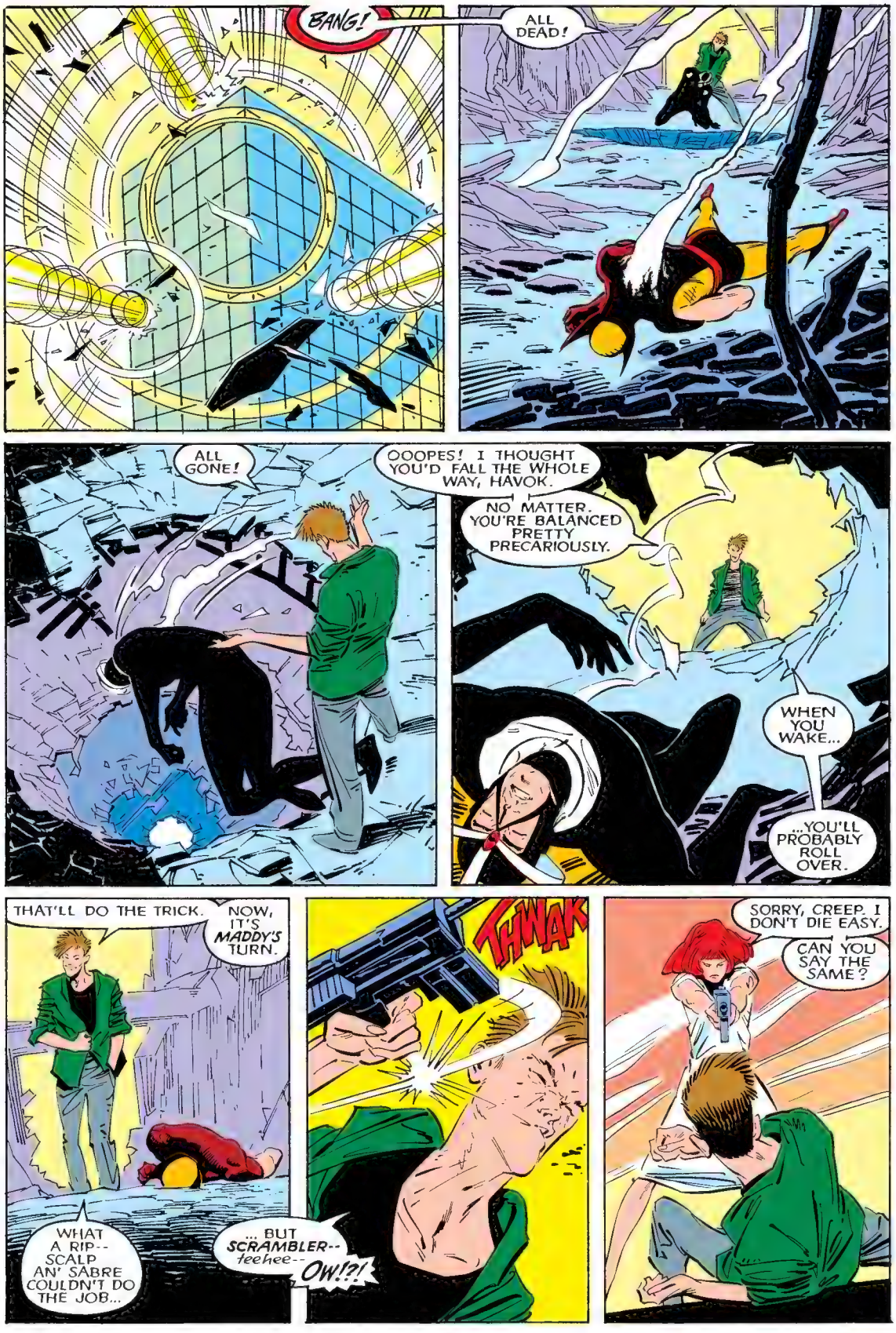

SAN FRANCISCO.
IN THE SHADOW OF THE EMPEROR NORTON BRIDGE...
...(BETTER KNOWN TO TOURISTS AND FOREIGNERS AS THE OAKLAND-BAY BRIDGE)...
... STANDS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.
EMERGENCY
MY TELEPATHIC SCAN HAS LOCATED MS. PRYOR ON THE FOURTH FLOOR.
QUITE FRANTIC, TOO. EVIDENTLY, ALL RECORDS OF HER EXISTENCE HAVE DISAPPEARED.
YOU SURE?
I CAN ONLY RELATE WHAT I "SEE" IN HER THOUGHTS. SHE KNOWS WHO SHE IS, BUT SHE CAN'T PROVE IT.
BOY! PEOPLE ARE SURE FUN TO WATCH!
AND FROM HERE THEY LOOK SO SMALL!
WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT, ANYWAY?
I MEAN, YOU DRAG THE X-MEN ACROSS THE COUNTRY, WOLVERINE, WITH HARDLY A WORD OF EXPLANATION.
JUST BECAUSE STORM NAMED YOU LEADER IN HER ABSENCE, DOESN'T MEAN WE'LL FOLLOW YOU BLINDLY.
WE'RE HERE, HAVOK, BECAUSE I GOT A CALL FROM YOUR BROTHER'S WIFE--REAL ANGRY, REAL SCARED--DEMANDING TO KNOW WHY CYCLOPS DUMPED HER...
... AN' TOOK THEIR BABY!
THAT'S CRAZY--SCOTT WOULDN'T--!
MAYBE. MAYBE NOT. WE'LL SEE.
WE'RE PLAYIN' CAGEY, 'CAUSE SHE SAID SHE WAS NAILED BY SCALPHUNTER AN' ARCLIGHT.
MARAUDERS?!?
GOLD STAR FOR YOU.
PSYLOCKE, CAST A DEFENSIVE SCAN AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD. YOU KNOW WHO TO LOOK FOR. IF THE COAST IS CLEAR...
WOLVERINE--
--MARAUDERS--
--SCATTERED NEAR THE HOSPITAL!
AND TWO ARE ALREADY INSIDE!

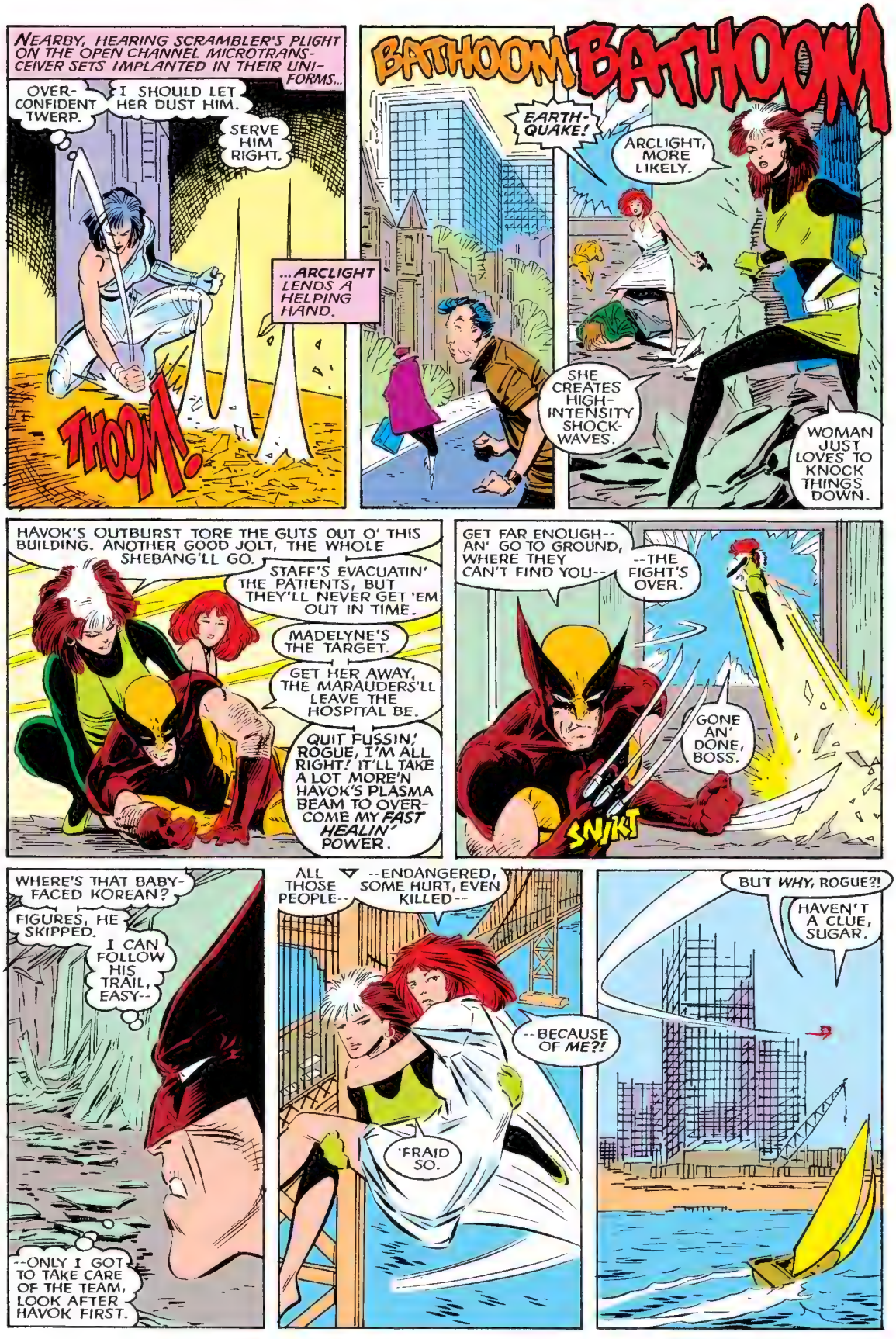

ROGUE-- GO!
NO SWEAT, BOSS!
AH'M GOOD AS THERE!
WHUATHEHEY--?!
WIND?
THOUGHT I SAW--!
... I FELT--!
NEVV
ZOOOM!
... SOMEONE PASS BY?!
HIYA, SABRETOOTH!
?!?
LAST TIME WE SCRAPPED*...
...YOU GOT THE DROP ON ME.
*X-MEN #213-- AnnN.
THIS TIME, SUGAR--
--IT'S MY TURN!
WHAMMO!
AH GOT NO CAUSE TO CROW--
--AH'M TOO LATE TO SAVE MADELYNE'S NURSE, POOR GAL.
GIVE IT UP, SCALP-HUNTER--
KRAK
--YOU'RE FINISHED!
WANNA BET, HONEY?
SPA-
OHWHW!


YOUR TURN, RED.
KATH
LIKE BLAZES!
?!!
SLAMM!
AIN'T YOU THE FEISTY LI'L SWEET-HEART!
ALMOST A SHAME TO PUNCH YOUR TICKET.
BUT SINISTER GAVE THE WORD...
...AN' I AIN'T ABOUT TO CROSS HIM.
WHY?!!
WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE, WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!
WE ALREADY GOT WHAT WE WANT.
YOU'RE JUST A LOOSE END.
SOK!
RELAX, MA'AM, SIMPLY LET THINGS HAPPEN.
FIGHT HARD AS YOU CAN, IT WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE IN THE EN
NGNH!
ZARK!
PERFECT SHOT, DAZZLER.
YOUR SOLID LIGHT BLAST KNOCKED SCALPHUNTER UNCONSCIOUS.
ONLY BECAUSE YOU SHOWED ME WHERE TO SHOOT...
...AND MONITORED MY POWER SO I WOULDN'T USE TOO MUCH ENERGY AND MAYBE KILL THE MAN.
THAT'S WHY WE'RE A TEAM, REMEMBER? SO OUR VARIOUS ABILITIES CAN COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER.
DAZZLER--PSYLOCKE--BEHIND US--

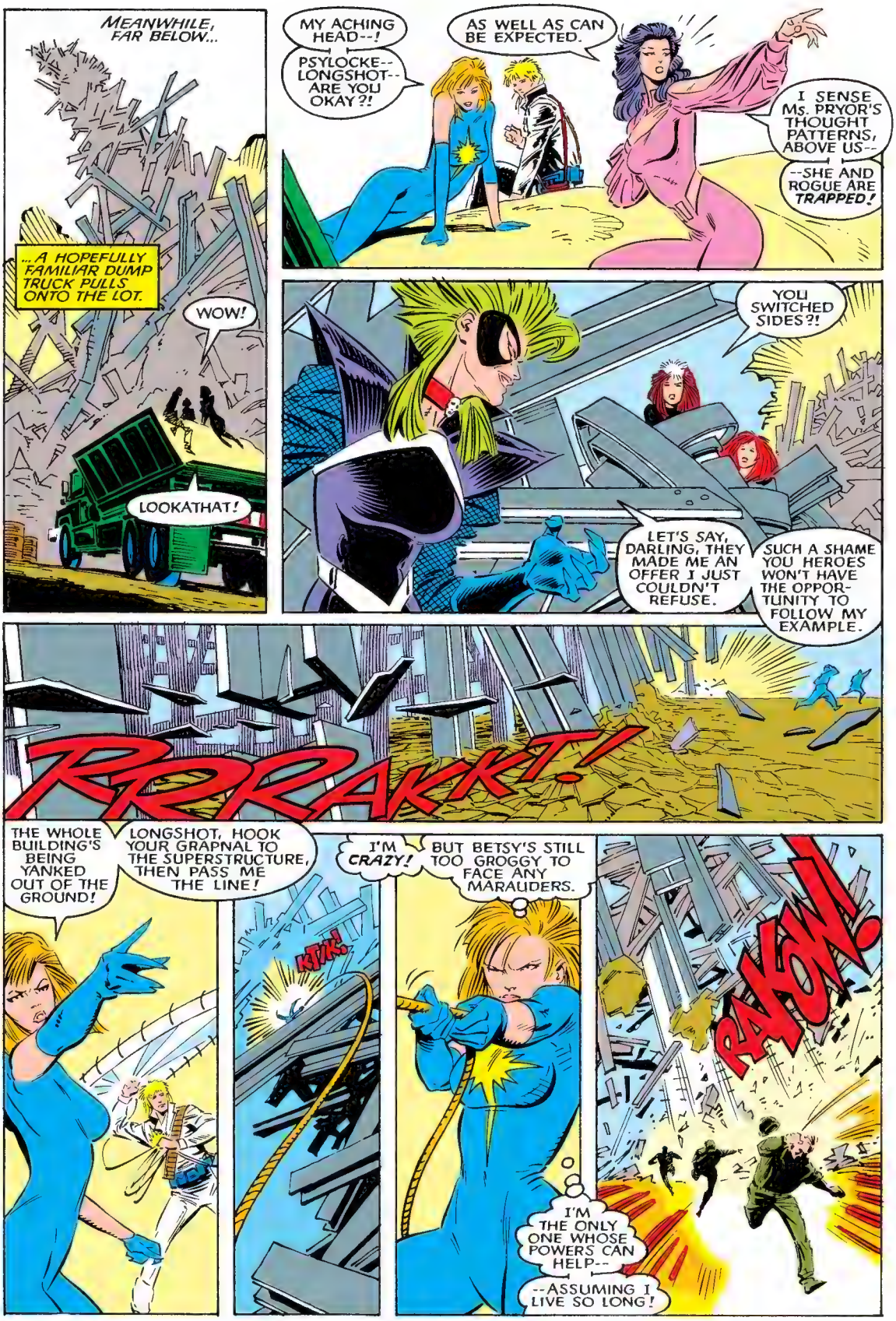

--TROUBLE!
THE WORLD-- SPINNING UPSIDE-DOWN!
CAN'T ORIENT MYSELF--BODY OR THOUGHTS--
--FOCUS CONCEN-TRATION--
--TO LOCATE OUR ATTACKER AND STRIKE BACK!
BY THE TIME VERTIGO'S DONE TWISTING YOU INSIDE-OUT, X-DIPS...
...YOU'LL WISH YOU WERE DEAD!
THEN, IT'LL BE THE MARAUDERS' PLEASURE TO MAKE THAT WISH COME TRUE!
LONGSHOT-- OHMIGOSH-- WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!!
AW, GEE-- COULDN'T WAIT, huh?
SUIT YOUR-SELVES.
NOT SURE.
IT JUST... SORT OF... FELT RIGHT.
THAT'S CRAZY!
HOLD ON, BOTH OF YOU--
--TIGHT AS YOU CAN!
KLANG!
NOW WHAT?!
WE'RE NOT THROUGH YET, ALISON.
BETTER CLOSE YOUR EYES.
WHY
NNNN

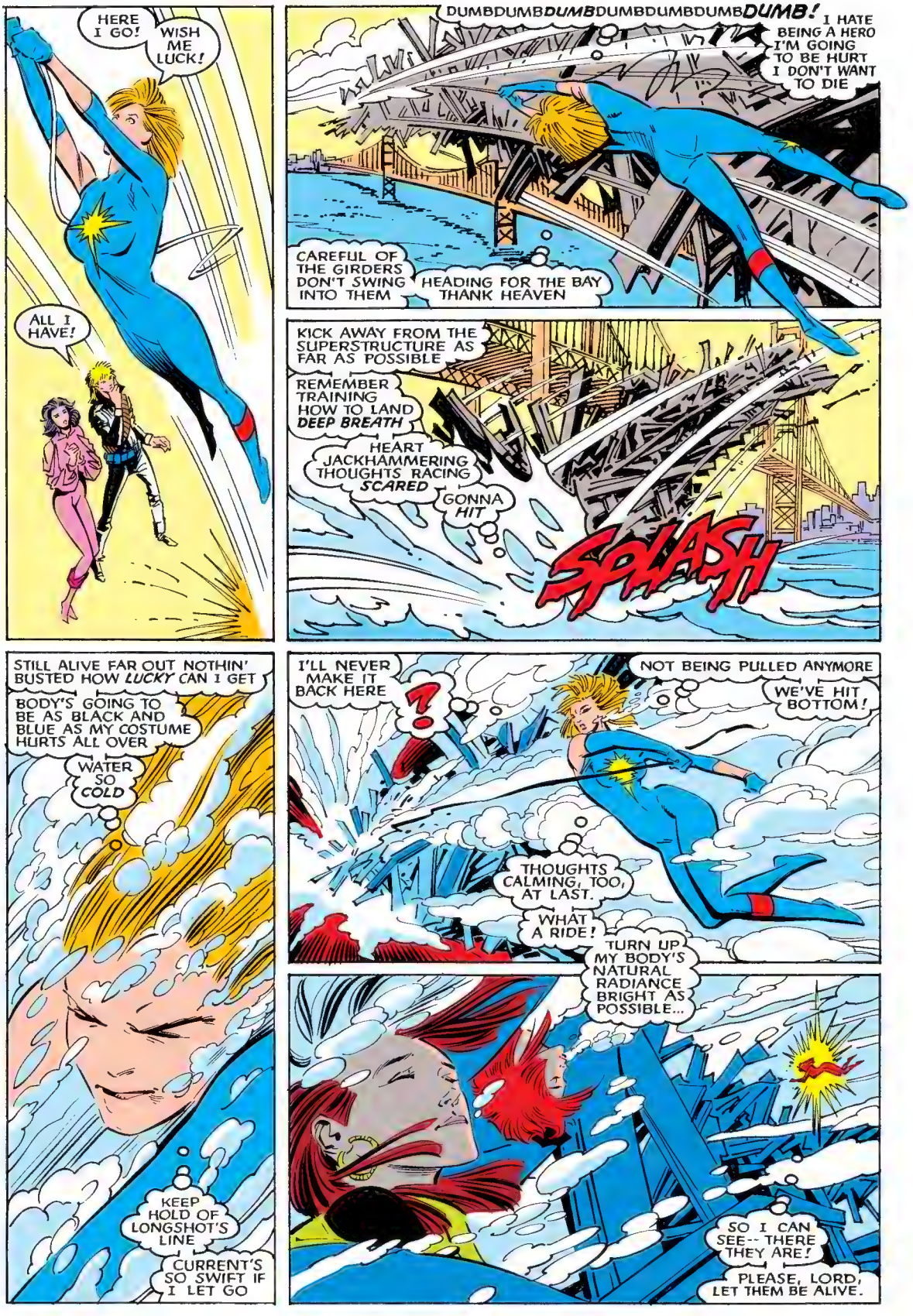

SOME SNAZZY CIRCUS STUNT, eh, HARPOON?
IT WILL NOT SAVE THEM.
AS HIS HARPOON LEAVES THE ESKIMO'S HAND, STEEL IS INSTANTLY TRANSMUTED TO ENERGY--
--A SPEAR OF FIRE THAT MAKES PSYLOCKE FEEL...
...AS THOUGH HER NERVOUS SYSTEM HAS BEEN DOUSED IN ACID.
THE PAIN IS TOO SUDDEN, TOO EXTREME-- IT OVERWHELMS HER DEFENSES-- IT IS CAST OUTWARDS BY HER TELEPATHIC TALENT INTO THE MINDS OF HER TEAMMATES, THOSE BY HER SIDE...
...AND IN THE HOSPITAL.
WOLVERINE-- MY LORD-- I'M BURNING!
HANG ON, BOY!
NOTHIN' WRONG WITH US, ONLY A PSI-PROJECTION OF PSYLOCKE'S HURT.
IT'S MORE-- THAN I-- CAN STAND!
YOU GOT TO!
FIGURED HAVOK TO BE CAST FROM THE SAME MOLD AS HIS BIG BROTHER, CYCLOPS. WHAT IF I'M WRONG, SUPPOSE HE CAN'T HACK IT AS AN X-MAN?!
EMERGENCY
HAVE TO GET AHOLD OF MYSELF!
TEAM'S COUNTING ON ME, CAN'T LET 'EM DOWN!
HI THERE, I'M SCRAMBLER!
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS TOUCH PEOPLE...
... AND I MAKE THEIR POWERS GO ABSOLUTELY...
...CRAZY!
FZZT


BANG!
ALL DEAD!
ALL GONE!
OOOPES! I THOUGHT YOU'D FALL THE WHOLE WAY, HAVOK.
NO MATTER. YOU'RE BALANCED PRETTY PRECARIOUSLY.
WHEN YOU WAKE...
...YOU'LL PROBABLY ROLL OVER.
THAT'LL DO THE TRICK.
NOW, IT'S MADDY'S TURN.
WHAT A RIP-- SCALP AN' SABRE COULDN'T DO THE JOB...
THWAK
... BUT SCRAMBLER-- teehee--
OW!?!
SORRY, CREEP. I DON'T DIE EASY.
CAN YOU SAY THE SAME?

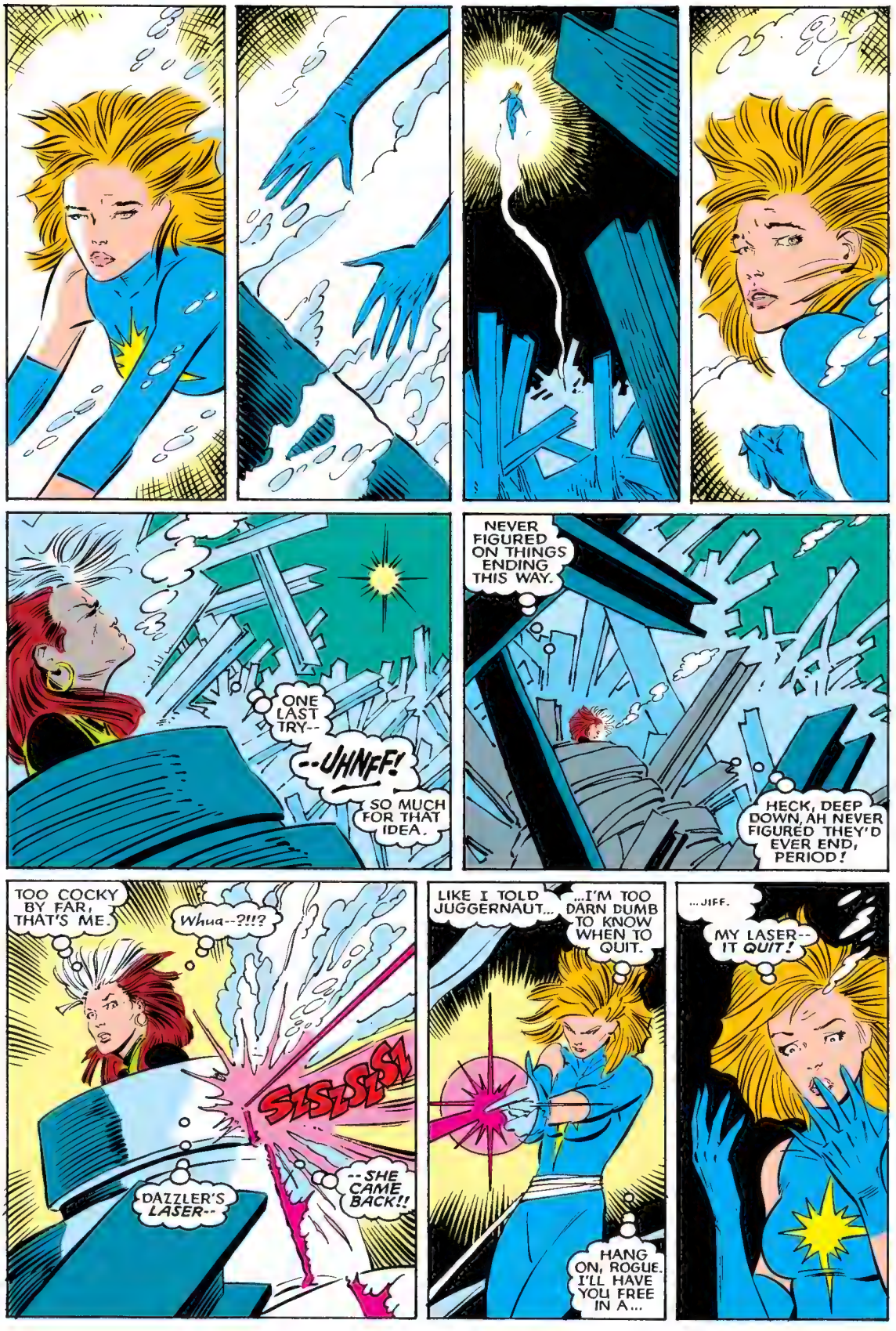

NEARBY, HEARING SCRAMBLER'S PLIGHT ON THE OPEN CHANNEL MICROTRANSCEIVER SETS IMPLANTED IN THEIR UNIFORMS...
OVER-CONFIDENT TWERP.
I SHOULD LET HER DUST HIM.
SERVE HIM RIGHT.
...ARCLIGHT LENDS A HELPING HAND.
THOOM!
BATHOOM
BATHOOM
EARTH-QUAKE!
ARCLIGHT, MORE LIKELY.
SHE CREATES HIGH-INTENSITY SHOCK-WAVES.
WOMAN JUST LOVES TO KNOCK THINGS DOWN.
HAVOK'S OUTBURST TORE THE GUTS OUT O' THIS BUILDING. ANOTHER GOOD JOLT, THE WHOLE SHEBANG'LL GO.
STAFF'S EVACUATIN' THE PATIENTS, BUT THEY'LL NEVER GET 'EM OUT IN TIME.
MADELYNE'S THE TARGET.
GET HER AWAY, THE MARAUDERS'LL LEAVE THE HOSPITAL BE.
QUIT FUSSIN', ROGUE, I'M ALL RIGHT! IT'LL TAKE A LOT MORE'N HAVOK'S PLASMA BEAM TO OVERCOME MY FAST HEALIN' POWER.
GET FAR ENOUGH-- AN' GO TO GROUND, WHERE THEY CAN'T FIND YOU--
--THE FIGHT'S OVER.
GONE AN' DONE, BOSS.
SNIKT
WHERE'S THAT BABY-FACED KOREAN?
FIGURES, HE SKIPPED.
I CAN FOLLOW HIS TRAIL, EASY--
--ONLY I GOT TO TAKE CARE OF THE TEAM, LOOK AFTER HAVOK FIRST.
ALL THOSE PEOPLE--
--ENDANGERED, SOME HURT, EVEN KILLED--
--BECAUSE OF ME?!
'FRAID SO.
BUT WHY, ROGUE?!
HAVEN'T A CLUE, SUGAR.

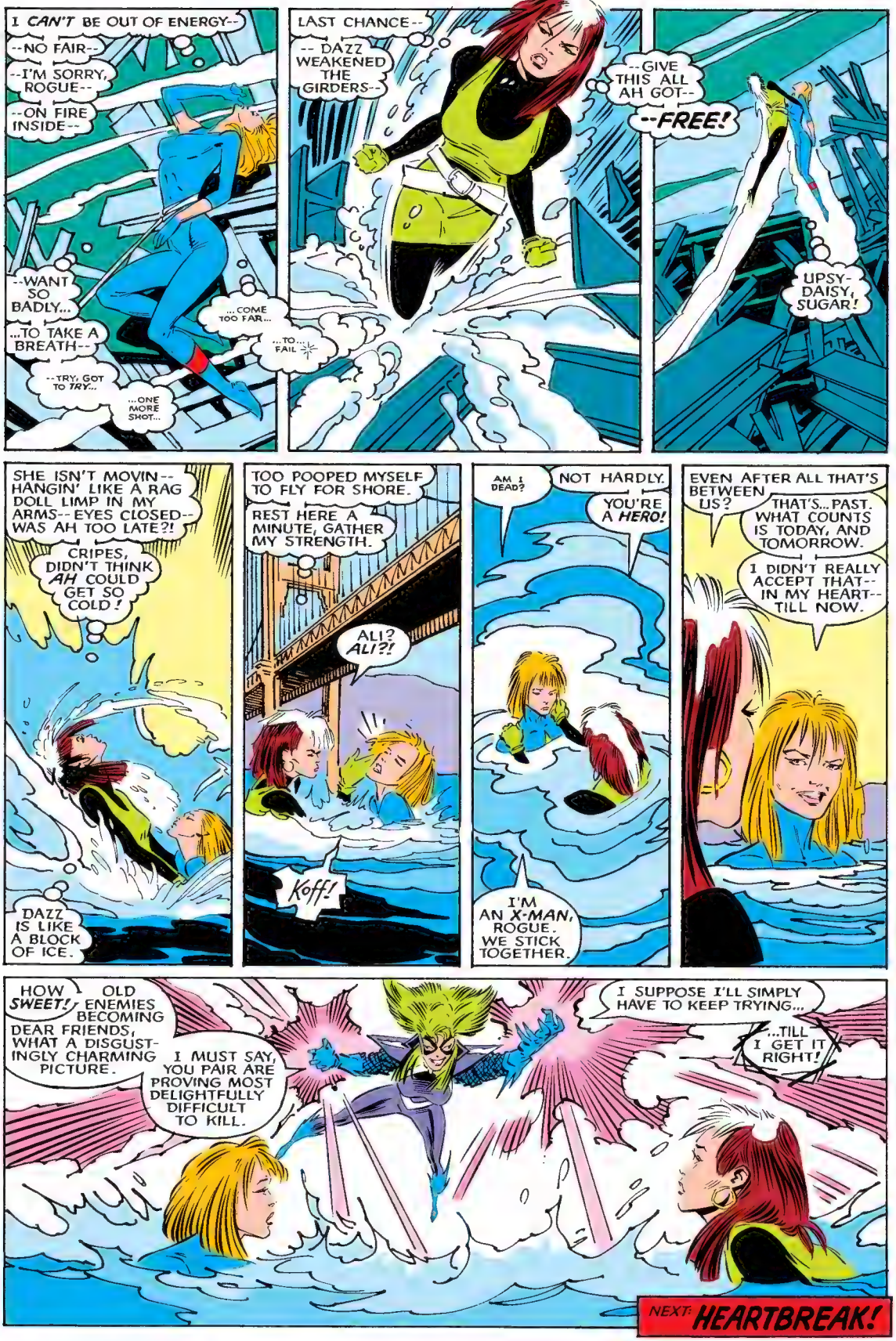
MARRY INTO THE X-MEN "FAMILY"...
...AH GUESS YOU CATCH A LOT OF X-MEN GRIEF.
ROGUE--THAT CONSTRUCTION SITE-- THE SKYSCRAPER--!
AW, CRUMBS!
THE GIRDERS-- THEY'RE CLIMBING AFTER US!
CAN'T OUTRUN 'EM!
WE'RE CAUGHT!
DON'T BOTHER TRYING TO FREE YOURSELF, ROGUE-DARLING!
I'VE MAGNETICALLY STRENGTHENED THE MOLECULAR BONDS OF THE METAL...
...TO SUCH AN EXTENT EVEN YOUR STRENGTH CAN'T SHATTER THEM.
I... I KNOW YOU!
LORNA DANE!
AH DON'T BELIEVE THIS!
POLARIS, HOW COULD YOU BE WORKIN' WITH THE MARAUDERS?!
SILLY GIRL, I LEAD THE MARAUDERS!


MEANWHILE, FAR BELOW...
...A HOPEFULLY FAMILIAR DUMP TRUCK PULLS ONTO THE LOT.
WOW!
LOOKATHAT!
MY ACHING HEAD--!
PSYLOCKE--LONGSHOT--ARE YOU OKAY?!
AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED.
I SENSE Ms. PRYOR'S THOUGHT PATTERNS, ABOVE US--
--SHE AND ROGUE ARE TRAPPED!
YOU SWITCHED SIDES?!
LET'S SAY, DARLING, THEY MADE ME AN OFFER I JUST COULDN'T REFUSE.
SUCH A SHAME YOU HEROES WON'T HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE.
RRRAKK!
THE WHOLE BUILDING'S BEING YANKED OUT OF THE GROUND!
LONGSHOT, HOOK YOUR GRAPNAL TO THE SUPERSTRUCTURE, THEN PASS ME THE LINE!
KTAK!
I'M CRAZY!
BUT BETSY'S STILL TOO GROGGY TO FACE ANY MARAUDERS.
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHOSE POWERS CAN HELP--
--ASSUMING I LIVE SO LONG!
RAKOW!


HERE I GO!
WISH ME LUCK!
ALL I HAVE!
DUMBDUMBDUMBDUMBDUMBDUMBDUMB!
I HATE BEING A HERO I'M GOING TO BE HURT I DON'T WANT TO DIE
CAREFUL OF THE GIRDERS DON'T SWING INTO THEM
HEADING FOR THE BAY THANK HEAVEN
KICK AWAY FROM THE SUPERSTRUCTURE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE
REMEMBER TRAINING HOW TO LAND DEEP BREATH
HEART JACKHAMMERING THOUGHTS RACING SCARED
GONNA HIT
SPLASH
STILL ALIVE FAR OUT NOTHIN' BUSTED HOW LUCKY CAN I GET
BODY'S GOING TO BE AS BLACK AND BLUE AS MY COSTUME HURTS ALL OVER
WATER SO COLD
KEEP HOLD OF LONGSHOT'S LINE
CURRENT'S SO SWIFT IF I LET GO
I'LL NEVER MAKE IT BACK HERE
?
NOT BEING PULLED ANYMORE
WE'VE HIT BOTTOM!
THOUGHTS CALMING, TOO, AT LAST.
WHAT A RIDE!
TURN UP MY BODY'S NATURAL RADIANCE BRIGHT AS POSSIBLE...
SO I CAN SEE-- THERE THEY ARE!
PLEASE, LORD, LET THEM BE ALIVE.

TOOK LONGER THAN I THOUGHT TO REACH THEM-- LUNGS'RE ALREADY STARTING TO HURT-- NO TIME TO WASTE.
Ms. PRYOR LOOKS IN WORSE SHAPE.
I'LL CUT HER LOOSE FIRST.
SLSLSZ
DON'T BE FRIGHTENED. MY LASER'S ONLY SLICING STEEL, IT WON'T TOUCH YOU.
BINGO!
OH, CRIPES -- SUPPOSE SHE CAN'T SWIM?!
BUT IF I STAY WITH HER...
... ROGUE'S DONE FOR!
HOPE YOU MAKE IT, MADELYNE!
HOPE I MAKE IT.
WATER'S TURNED AWFULLY MURKY.
NO-- IT'S ME--
--MY GLOW'S FADING!!
LASING UNDERWATER TOOK MORE OUT OF ME THAN I EXPECTED.
DUNNO IF I HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY LEFT FOR ROGUE.
SHE KNOWS IT, TOO.
GO ON, DAZZ--YOU DID YOUR BEST--
--YOU SAVED MADELYNE, THAT'S THE IMPORTANT THING--
--NOW SAVE YOURSELF!
SCOOT, GAL, WHILE YOU'RE STILL ABLE!
NO SENSE BOTH OF US BECOMIN' FISH FOOD.
FINALLY, THIS WAY, THE SCALES BETWEEN US'LL BE BALANCED.
BE SMART FOR ONCE, LIGHTENGALE-- GO!


ONE LAST TRY--
--UHNFF!
SO MUCH FOR THAT IDEA.
NEVER FIGURED ON THINGS ENDING THIS WAY.
HECK, DEEP DOWN, AH NEVER FIGURED THEY'D EVER END, PERIOD!
TOO COCKY BY FAR, THAT'S ME.
Whua--?!!?
SIZZZZ
DAZZLER'S LASER--
--SHE CAME BACK!!
LIKE I TOLD JUGGERNAUT...
...I'M TOO DARN DUMB TO KNOW WHEN TO QUIT.
HANG ON, ROGUE. I'LL HAVE YOU FREE IN A...
...JIFF.
MY LASER-- IT QUIT!


I CAN'T BE OUT OF ENERGY--
--NO FAIR--
--I'M SORRY, ROGUE--
--ON FIRE INSIDE--
--WANT SO BADLY...
...TO TAKE A BREATH--
--TRY, GOT TO TRY...
...ONE MORE SHOT...
...COME TOO FAR...
...TO... FAIL
LAST CHANCE--
-- DAZZ WEAKENED THE GIRDERS--
--GIVE THIS ALL AH GOT--
--FREE!
UPSY-DAISY, SUGAR!
SHE ISN'T MOVIN'-- HANGIN' LIKE A RAG DOLL LIMP IN MY ARMS-- EYES CLOSED-- WAS AH TOO LATE?!
CRIPES, DIDN'T THINK AH COULD GET SO COLD!
DAZZ IS LIKE A BLOCK OF ICE.
TOO POOPED MYSELF TO FLY FOR SHORE.
REST HERE A MINUTE, GATHER MY STRENGTH.
ALI? ALI?!
Koff!
AM I DEAD?
NOT HARDLY.
YOU'RE A HERO!
I'M AN X-MAN, ROGUE. WE STICK TOGETHER.
EVEN AFTER ALL THAT'S BETWEEN US?
THAT'S... PAST. WHAT COUNTS IS TODAY, AND TOMORROW.
I DIDN'T REALLY ACCEPT THAT-- IN MY HEART-- TILL NOW.
HOW SWEET! OLD ENEMIES BECOMING DEAR FRIENDS, WHAT A DISGUSTINGLY CHARMING PICTURE.
I MUST SAY, YOU PAIR ARE PROVING MOST DELIGHTFULLY DIFFICULT TO KILL.
I SUPPOSE I'LL SIMPLY HAVE TO KEEP TRYING...
...TILL I GET IT RIGHT!
NEXT: HEARTBREAK!

MARVEL
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
TM
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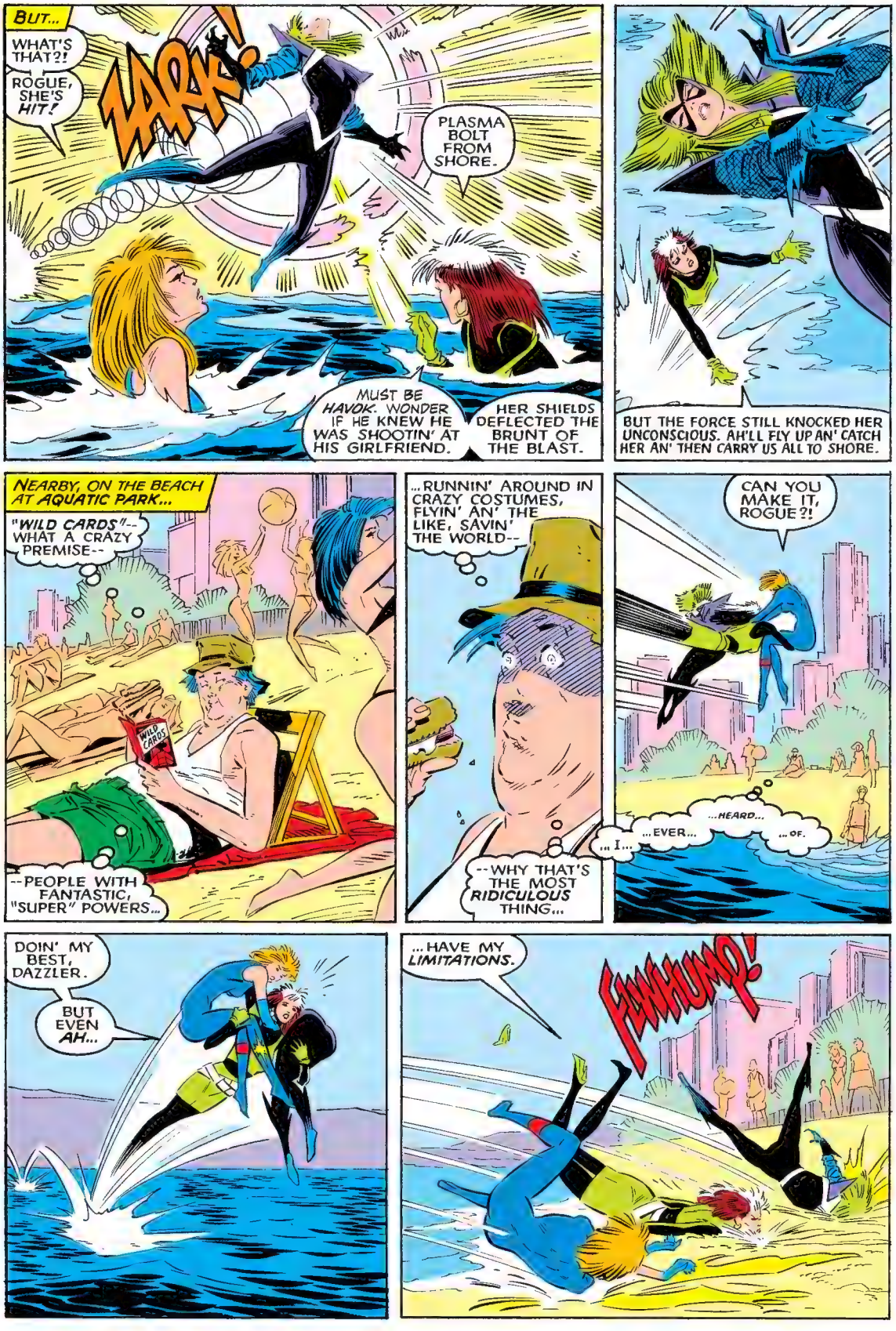
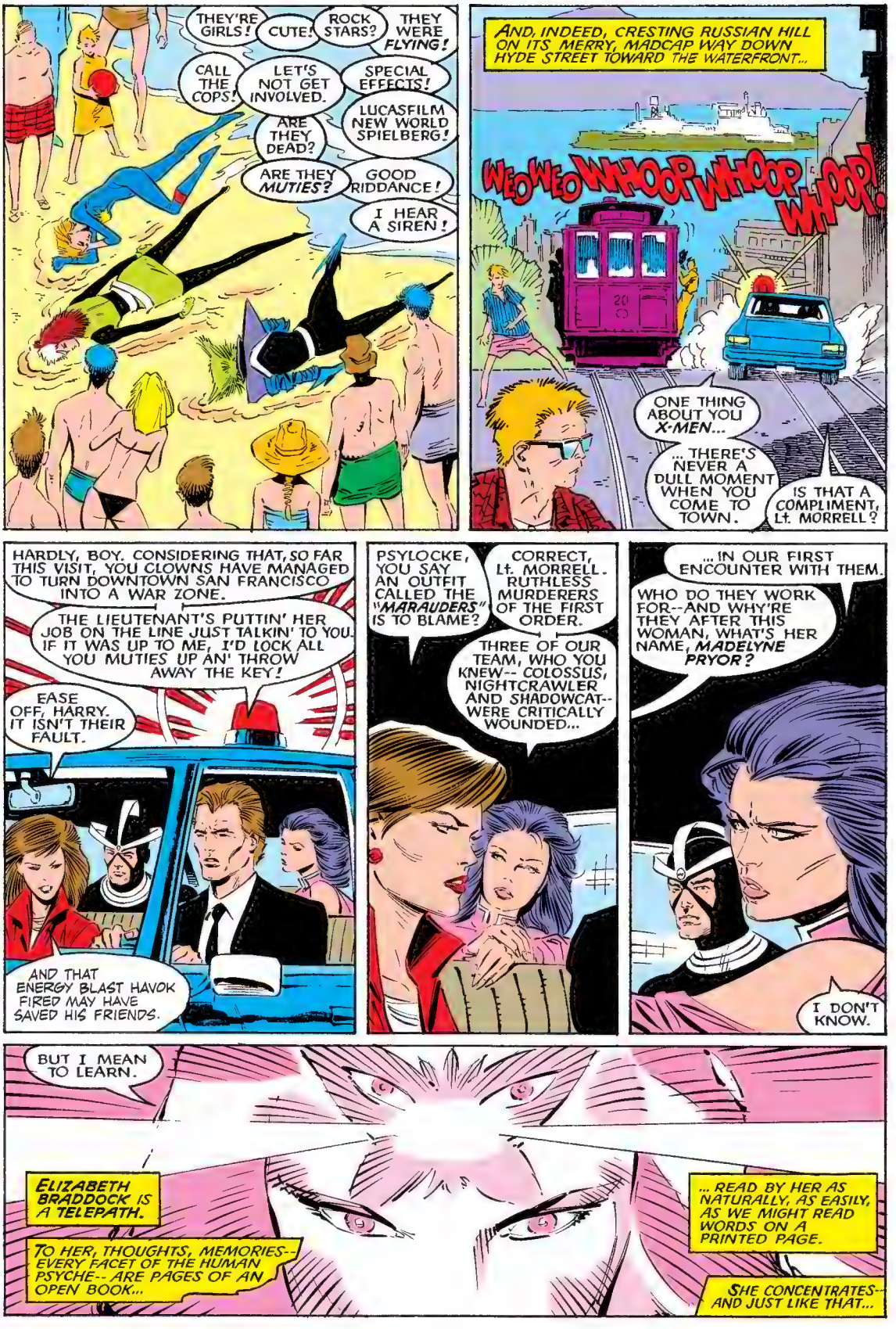
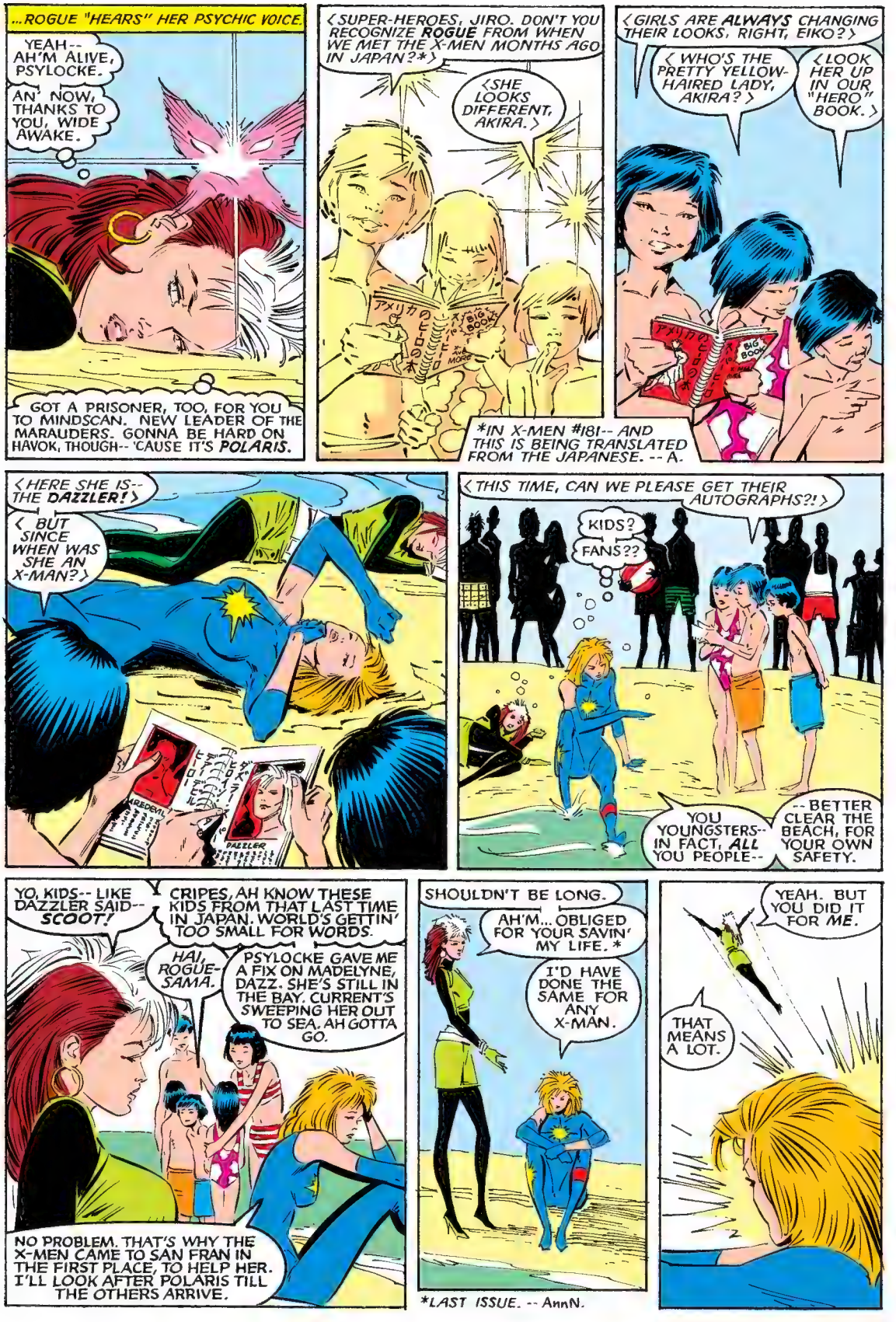
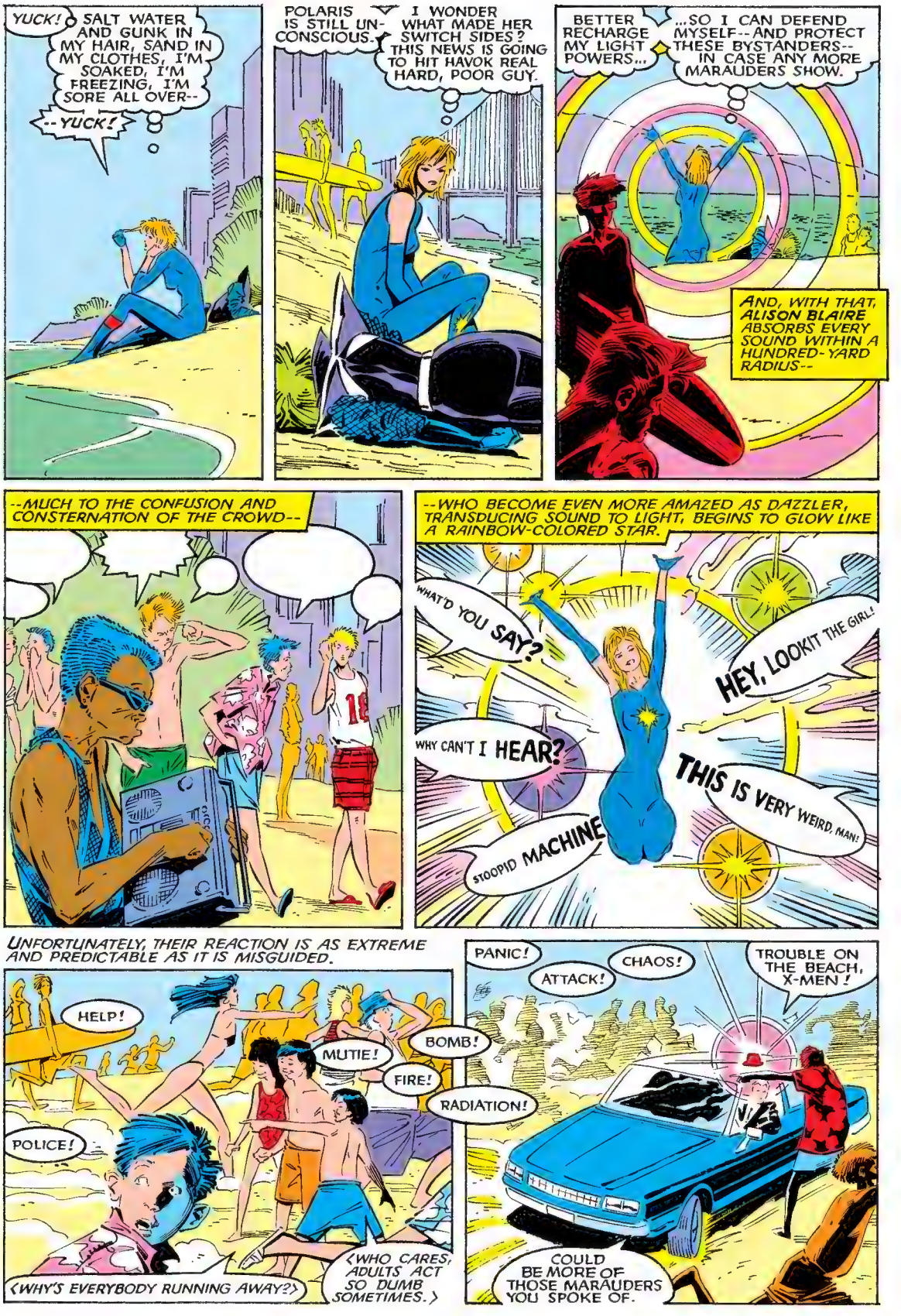
AUTHORITY
SILVESTRI - GREEN

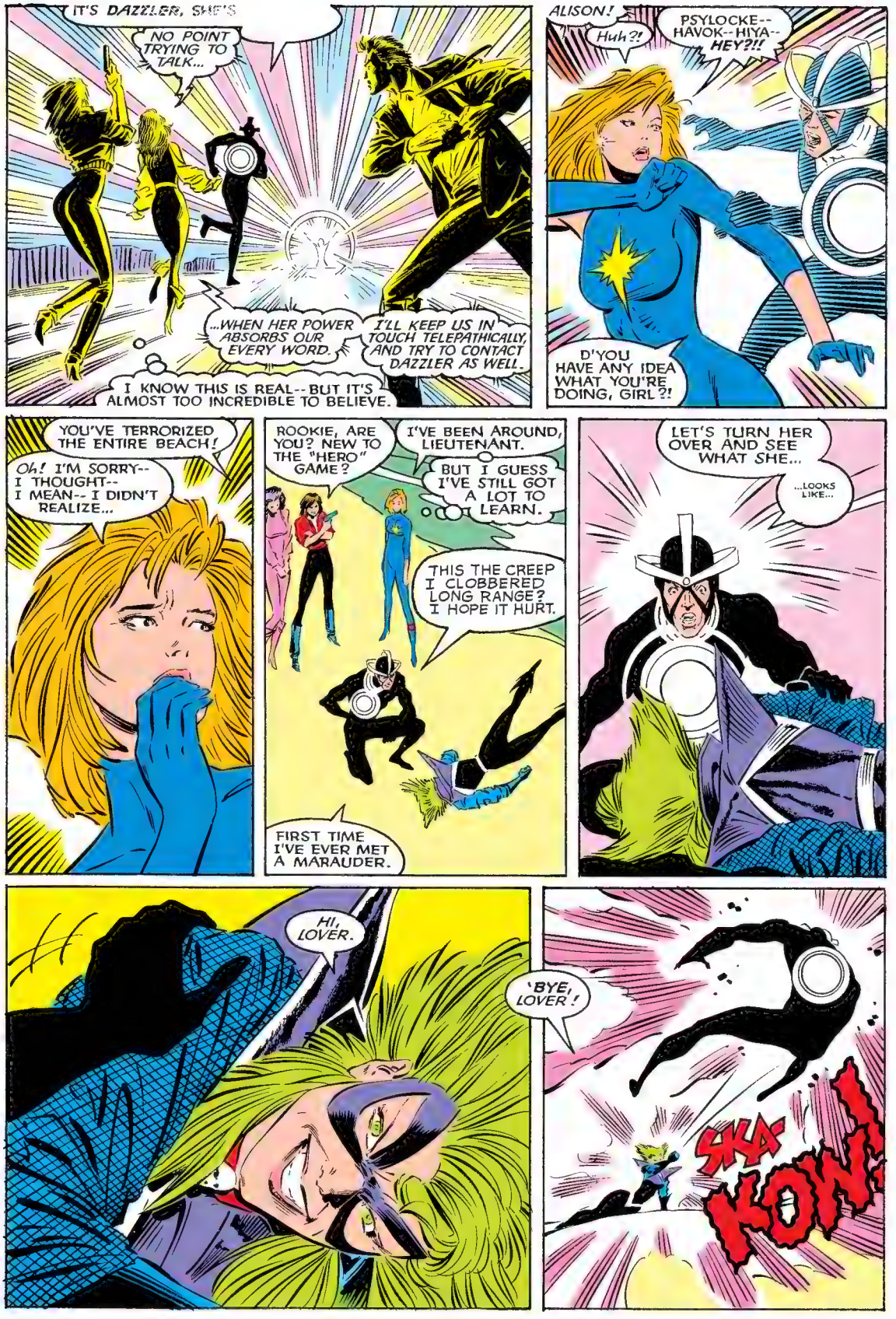
LIFE'S TOUGH WHEN YOU'RE A MUTANT. BAD ENOUGH TO BE BORN WITH PARAHUMAN POWERS THAT MAKE YOU STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD, A FEW NOBLE-HEARTED LUNATICS GO AND MAKE THINGS EVEN WORSE FOR THEMSELVES BY HOOKING UP WITH THIS TEAM OF SELF-STYLED HEROES, WHO CALL THEMSELVES THE X-MEN AND FIGURE ITS THEIR JOB TO GET IN THE WAY OF EVERY BAD GUY WORTH THE NAME WHO WANTS TO RULE THE WORLD, OR OTHERWISE PURSUE A VIOLENTLY ANTISOCIAL CAREER. AND BECAUSE OF WHO THEY ARE, THEIR GOOD DEEDS RARELY WIN THEM ANY RESPECT, OR EVEN THANKS; BUT INSTEAD, FAR MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, ONLY...
HEARTBREAK!
CASE IN POINT: SAN FRANCISCO BAY--
--WHERE, IN THE WATER, WE FIND ROGUE AND DAZZLER--TWO BATTERED, BRUISED, EXTREMELY WEARY MEMBERS OF THAT AFOREMENTIONED TEAM OF OUTLAW HEROES, WHO'VE ONLY JUST ESCAPED FROM CERTAIN DEATH...
...AT THE HANDS OF THE WOMAN HOVERING OVERHEAD, A FORMER FRIEND NOW BECOME THE DEADLIEST OF ENEMIES, POLARIS.
YOU TWO LADIES ARE PROVING DELIGHTFULLY DIFFICULT TO KILL.
BUT I WAGER THAT THIS TIME...
...I'LL DO IT RIGHT!
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION
STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER
MARC SILVESTRI and DAN GREEN
ARTISTS
GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER
ANN NOCENTI, EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER, EDITOR IN CHIEF


BUT...
WHAT'S THAT?!
ROGUE, SHE'S HIT!
ZARK!
PLASMA BOLT FROM SHORE.
MUST BE HAVOK. WONDER IF HE KNEW HE WAS SHOOTIN' AT HIS GIRLFRIEND.
HER SHIELDS DEFLECTED THE BRUNT OF THE BLAST.
BUT THE FORCE STILL KNOCKED HER UNCONSCIOUS. AH'LL FLY UP AN' CATCH HER AN' THEN CARRY US ALL TO SHORE.
NEARBY, ON THE BEACH AT AQUATIC PARK...
"WILD CARDS"-- WHAT A CRAZY PREMISE--
WILD CARDS
--PEOPLE WITH FANTASTIC, "SUPER" POWERS...
...RUNNIN' AROUND IN CRAZY COSTUMES, FLYIN' AN' THE LIKE, SAVIN' THE WORLD--
--WHY THAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING...
CAN YOU MAKE IT, ROGUE?!
...I...
...EVER...
...HEARD...
...OF.
DOIN' MY BEST, DAZZLER.
BUT EVEN AH...
...HAVE MY LIMITATIONS.
FWHUMP!


THEY'RE GIRLS!
CUTE!
ROCK STARS?
THEY WERE FLYING!
CALL THE COPS!
LET'S NOT GET INVOLVED.
SPECIAL EFFECTS!
ARE THEY DEAD?
LUCASFILM NEW WORLD SPIELBERG!
ARE THEY MUTIES?
GOOD RIDDANCE!
I HEAR A SIREN!
AND, INDEED, CRESTING RUSSIAN HILL ON ITS MERRY, MADCAP WAY DOWN HYDE STREET TOWARD THE WATERFRONT...
WEOWEO WHOOP WHOOP WHOOP!
ONE THING ABOUT YOU X-MEN...
... THERE'S NEVER A DULL MOMENT WHEN YOU COME TO TOWN.
IS THAT A COMPLIMENT, Lt. MORRELL?
HARDLY, BOY. CONSIDERING THAT, SO FAR THIS VISIT, YOU CLOWNS HAVE MANAGED TO TURN DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO INTO A WAR ZONE.
THE LIEUTENANT'S PUTTIN' HER JOB ON THE LINE JUST TALKIN' TO YOU. IF IT WAS UP TO ME, I'D LOCK ALL YOU MUTIES UP AN' THROW AWAY THE KEY!
EASE OFF, HARRY. IT ISN'T THEIR FAULT.
AND THAT ENERGY BLAST HAVOK FIRED MAY HAVE SAVED HIS FRIENDS.
PSYLOCKE, YOU SAY AN OUTFIT CALLED THE "MARAUDERS" IS TO BLAME?
CORRECT, Lt. MORRELL. RUTHLESS MURDERERS OF THE FIRST ORDER.
THREE OF OUR TEAM, WHO YOU KNEW-- COLOSSUS, NIGHTCRAWLER AND SHADOWCAT-- WERE CRITICALLY WOUNDED...
... IN OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THEM.
WHO DO THEY WORK FOR--AND WHY'RE THEY AFTER THIS WOMAN, WHAT'S HER NAME, MADELYNE PRYOR?
I DON'T KNOW.
BUT I MEAN TO LEARN.
ELIZABETH BRADDOCK IS A TELEPATH.
TO HER, THOUGHTS, MEMORIES-- EVERY FACET OF THE HUMAN PSYCHE-- ARE PAGES OF AN OPEN BOOK...
... READ BY HER AS NATURALLY, AS EASILY, AS WE MIGHT READ WORDS ON A PRINTED PAGE.
SHE CONCENTRATES-- AND JUST LIKE THAT...

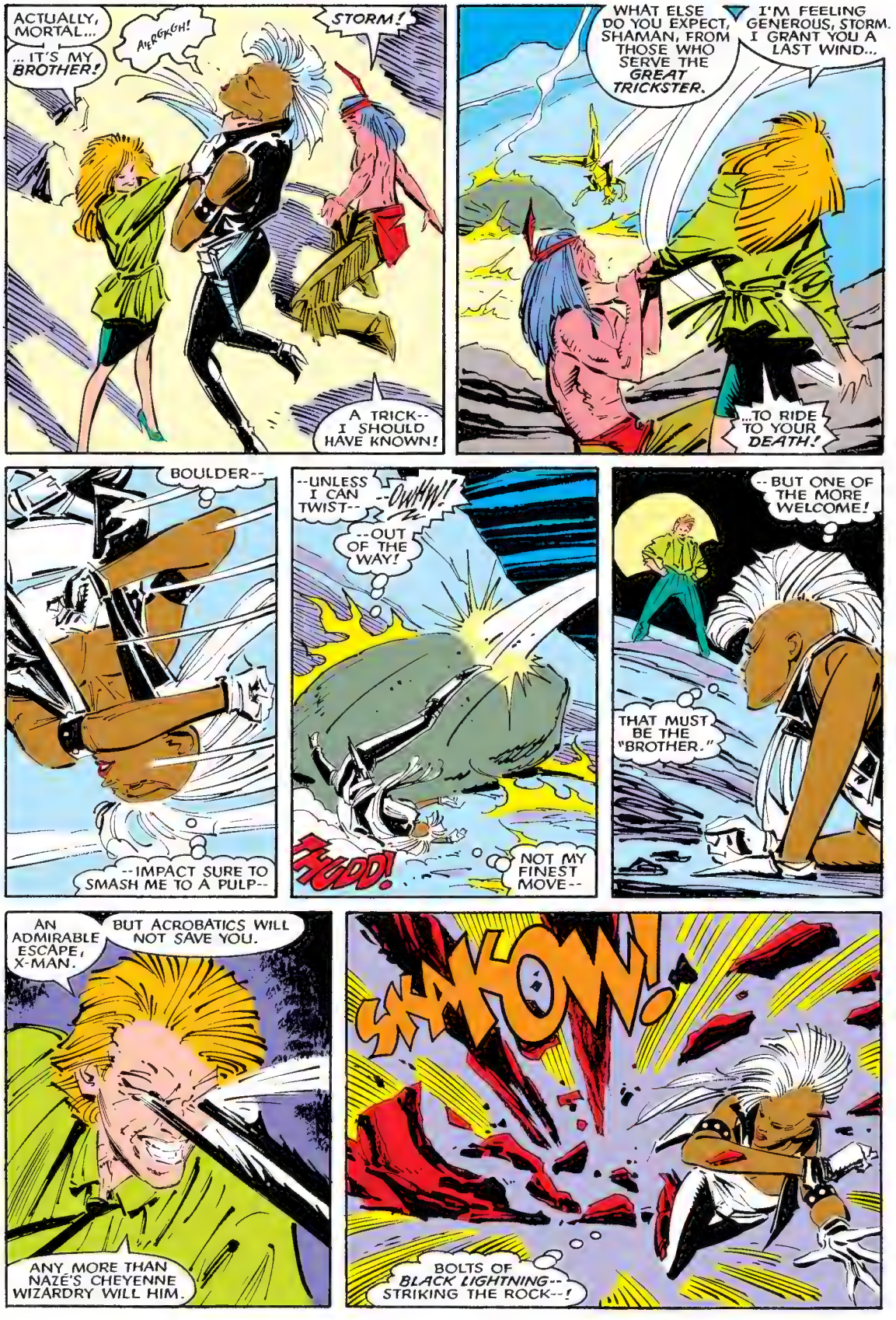

...ROGUE "HEARS" HER PSYCHIC VOICE.
YEAH-- AH'M ALIVE, PSYLOCKE.
AN' NOW, THANKS TO YOU, WIDE AWAKE.
GOT A PRISONER, TOO, FOR YOU TO MINDSCAN. NEW LEADER OF THE MARAUDERS. GONNA BE HARD ON HAVOK, THOUGH-- 'CAUSE IT'S POLARIS.
〈SUPER-HEROES, JIRO. DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE ROGUE FROM WHEN WE MET THE X-MEN MONTHS AGO IN JAPAN?*〉
〈SHE LOOKS DIFFERENT, AKIRA.〉
*IN X-MEN #181-- AND THIS IS BEING TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE. -- A.
〈GIRLS ARE ALWAYS CHANGING THEIR LOOKS, RIGHT, EIKO?〉
〈WHO'S THE PRETTY YELLOW-HAIRED LADY, AKIRA?〉
〈LOOK HER UP IN OUR "HERO" BOOK.〉
〈HERE SHE IS-- THE DAZZLER!〉
〈BUT SINCE WHEN WAS SHE AN X-MAN?〉
〈THIS TIME, CAN WE PLEASE GET THEIR AUTOGRAPHS?!〉
KIDS? FANS??
YOU YOUNGSTERS-- IN FACT, ALL YOU PEOPLE--
--BETTER CLEAR THE BEACH, FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY.
YO, KIDS-- LIKE DAZZLER SAID-- SCOOT!
CRIPES, AH KNOW THESE KIDS FROM THAT LAST TIME IN JAPAN. WORLD'S GETTIN' TOO SMALL FOR WORDS.
HAI, ROGUE-SAMA.
PSYLOCKE GAVE ME A FIX ON MADELYNE, DAZZ. SHE'S STILL IN THE BAY. CURRENT'S SWEEPING HER OUT TO SEA. AH GOTTA GO.
NO PROBLEM. THAT'S WHY THE X-MEN CAME TO SAN FRAN IN THE FIRST PLACE, TO HELP HER. I'LL LOOK AFTER POLARIS TILL THE OTHERS ARRIVE.
SHOULDN'T BE LONG.
AH'M... OBLIGED FOR YOUR SAVIN' MY LIFE. *
I'D HAVE DONE THE SAME FOR ANY X-MAN.
*LAST ISSUE. -- AnnN.
YEAH. BUT YOU DID IT FOR ME.
THAT MEANS A LOT.

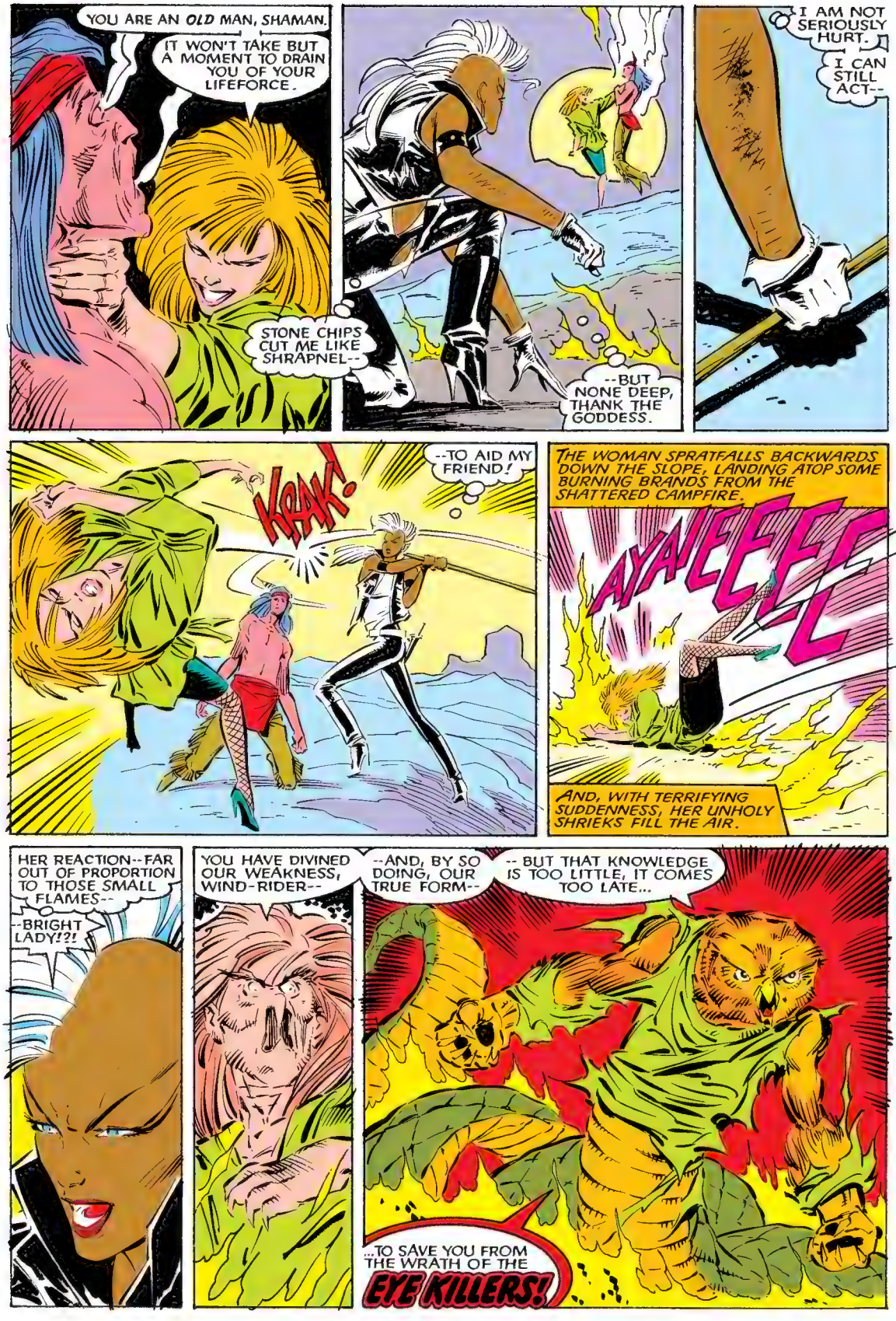

YUCK! SALT WATER AND GUNK IN MY HAIR, SAND IN MY CLOTHES, I'M SOAKED, I'M FREEZING, I'M SORE ALL OVER--
--YUCK!
POLARIS IS STILL UNCONSCIOUS.
I WONDER WHAT MADE HER SWITCH SIDES? THIS NEWS IS GOING TO HIT HAVOK REAL HARD, POOR GUY.
BETTER RECHARGE MY LIGHT POWERS...
...SO I CAN DEFEND MYSELF--AND PROTECT THESE BYSTANDERS--IN CASE ANY MORE MARAUDERS SHOW.
AND, WITH THAT, ALISON BLAIRE ABSORBS EVERY SOUND WITHIN A HUNDRED-YARD RADIUS--
--MUCH TO THE CONFUSION AND CONSTERNATION OF THE CROWD--
--WHO BECOME EVEN MORE AMAZED AS DAZZLER, TRANSDUCING SOUND TO LIGHT, BEGINS TO GLOW LIKE A RAINBOW-COLORED STAR.
WHAT'D YOU SAY?
HEY, LOOKIT THE GIRL!
WHY CAN'T I HEAR?
THIS IS VERY WEIRD, MAN!
STOOPID MACHINE
UNFORTUNATELY, THEIR REACTION IS AS EXTREME AND PREDICTABLE AS IT IS MISGUIDED.
HELP!
MUTIE!
BOMB!
FIRE!
RADIATION!
POLICE!
<WHY'S EVERYBODY RUNNING AWAY?>
<WHO CARES, ADULTS ACT SO DUMB SOMETIMES.>
PANIC!
ATTACK!
CHAOS!
TROUBLE ON THE BEACH, X-MEN!
COULD BE MORE OF THOSE MARAUDERS YOU SPOKE OF.


IT'S DAZZLER, SHE'S
NO POINT TRYING TO TALK...
...WHEN HER POWER ABSORBS OUR EVERY WORD.
I'LL KEEP US IN TOUCH TELEPATHICALLY, AND TRY TO CONTACT DAZZLER AS WELL.
I KNOW THIS IS REAL--BUT IT'S ALMOST TOO INCREDIBLE TO BELIEVE.
ALISON!
Huh?!
PSYLOCKE--HAVOK--HIYA--HEY?!!
D'YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'RE DOING, GIRL?!
YOU'VE TERRORIZED THE ENTIRE BEACH!
OH! I'M SORRY--I THOUGHT--I MEAN--I DIDN'T REALIZE...
ROOKIE, ARE YOU? NEW TO THE "HERO" GAME?
I'VE BEEN AROUND, LIEUTENANT.
BUT I GUESS I'VE STILL GOT A LOT TO LEARN.
THIS THE CREEP I CLOBBERED LONG RANGE? I HOPE IT HURT.
FIRST TIME I'VE EVER MET A MARAUDER.
LET'S TURN HER OVER AND SEE WHAT SHE...
...LOOKS LIKE...
HI, LOVER.
'BYE, LOVER!
SKA
KOW!

ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE...
... THE ROCKIES...
... IN THE CRISP CHILL OF A LATE SPRING EVENING...
HER NAME IS ORORO, WHICH MEANS BEAUTY.
SHE IS CALLED STORM.
ONCE SHE WAS A MUTANT, AND ALL THE ELEMENTS OF NATURE WERE HERS TO COMMAND.
AND WHILE SHE NO LONGER POSSESSES THOSE POWERS, SHE LEADS THE X-MEN STILL.
THAT LOSS, THAT ROLE, ARE IN LARGE MEASURE WHY SHE IS HERE...
...ON WHAT SHE SUSPECTS IS A FOOL'S QUEST TO REGAIN THE ONE...
... SO SHE MAY BETTER SERVE THE OTHER.
SUPPER'S COOKED!
YOU KNOW, NAZÉ, OUR JOURNEY WOULD BE FAR EASIER IN A VEHICLE, ON A DECENT ROAD.
TRUE ENOUGH.
IT IS AS THOUGH WE ARE FOLLOWING THE HARDEST TRAIL POSSIBLE.
WE ARE.
THAT'S WHAT A VISION QUEST IS ALL ABOUT, WOMAN.
A TEST OF BODY AND SPIRIT, MADE AS DIFFICULT AS CAN BE BECAUSE ONLY THE MOST WORTHY CAN SUCCEED.
WAS FORGE WORTHY?
ONCE.
WE HAVE TO BE BETTER.

I STILL CANNOT BELIEVE HE HAS BECOME AS CORRUPT AS YOU FEAR--
--SLAVE TO SOME OTHER-WORLD ADVERSARY.
THAT'S 'CAUSE YOU LOVE HIM.
AN' HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN RESTORE YOUR POWERS.
I CARE, TOO, STORM. HE WAS LIKE MY SON.
SHAMAN--SOMEONE COMES.
A GIRL--?!
IN THIS WILDERNESS--
IN SUCH CLOTHES?!
TAKES ALL KINDS, I GUESS.
HELP ME!
I SAW YOUR LIGHT--FOR PITY'S SAKE, HELP!
DO NOT CRY, CHILD.
THERE IS NO NEED TO BE AFRAID, YOU ARE SAFE WITH US.
WHO'S AFTER YOU, GIRL?!
HOW MANY, HOW CLOSE, WHAT WEAPONS?!
SHE IS IN SHOCK, NAZÉ. DO NOT BADGER HER.
BETTER THAT, THAN BE TAKEN BY SURPRISE.
HERE, SIT BY OUR FIRE, WARM YOURSELF.
Oh! N-NO, THAT'S OKAY, I'M FINE RIGHT HERE.
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME FOOD--?!
LOOK OUT!!
BOULDER--BIG AS A JEEP!
SMASH!!
IT WAS HURLED--
--BUT THE STRENGTH REQUIRED TO DO SO--
--NAZÉ, WHAT IS OUT THERE?!


ACTUALLY, MORTAL...
... IT'S MY BROTHER!
AHRGKH!
STORM!
A TRICK-- I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN!
WHAT ELSE DO YOU EXPECT, SHAMAN, FROM THOSE WHO SERVE THE GREAT TRICKSTER.
I'M FEELING GENEROUS, STORM. I GRANT YOU A LAST WIND...
...TO RIDE TO YOUR DEATH!
BOULDER--
--IMPACT SURE TO SMASH ME TO A PULP--
--UNLESS I CAN TWIST--
--OUWWW!
--OUT OF THE WAY!
THUDD!
NOT MY FINEST MOVE--
-- BUT ONE OF THE MORE WELCOME!
THAT MUST BE THE "BROTHER."
AN ADMIRABLE ESCAPE, X-MAN.
BUT ACROBATICS WILL NOT SAVE YOU.
ANY MORE THAN NAZÉ'S CHEYENNE WIZARDRY WILL HIM.
SHAKOW!
BOLTS OF BLACK LIGHTNING-- STRIKING THE ROCK--!

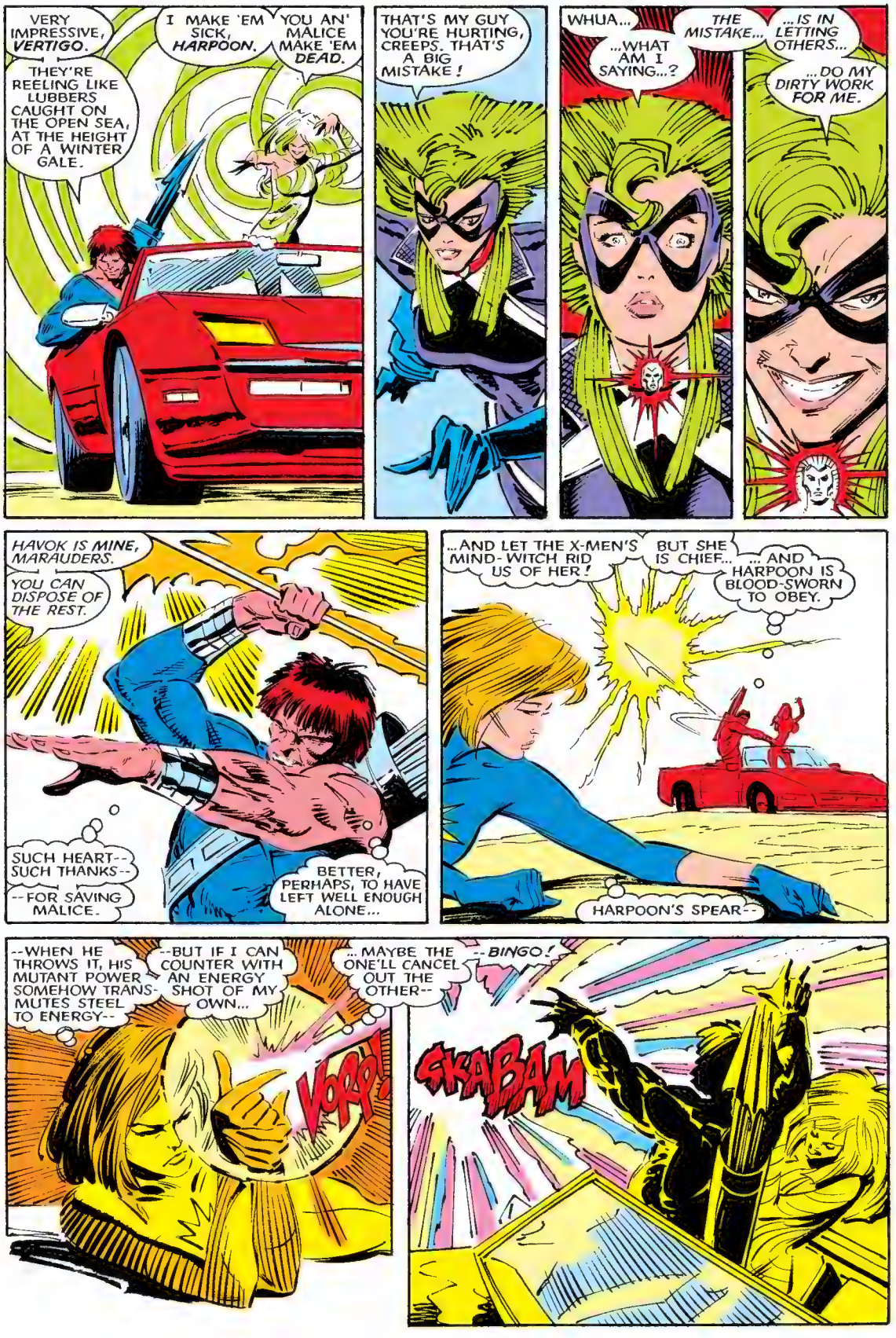

YOU ARE AN OLD MAN, SHAMAN.
IT WON'T TAKE BUT A MOMENT TO DRAIN YOU OF YOUR LIFEFORCE.
STONE CHIPS CUT ME LIKE SHRAPNEL--
--BUT NONE DEEP, THANK THE GODDESS.
I AM NOT SERIOUSLY HURT.
I CAN STILL ACT--
KRAK!
--TO AID MY FRIEND!
THE WOMAN SPRATFALLS BACKWARDS DOWN THE SLOPE, LANDING ATOP SOME BURNING BRANDS FROM THE SHATTERED CAMPFIRE.
AYAIEEEE-E
AND, WITH TERRIFYING SUDDENNESS, HER UNHOLY SHRIEKS FILL THE AIR.
HER REACTION--FAR OUT OF PROPORTION TO THOSE SMALL FLAMES--
--BRIGHT LADY!?!
YOU HAVE DIVINED OUR WEAKNESS, WIND-RIDER--
--AND, BY SO DOING, OUR TRUE FORM--
-- BUT THAT KNOWLEDGE IS TOO LITTLE, IT COMES TOO LATE...
...TO SAVE YOU FROM THE WRATH OF THE
EYE KILLERS!

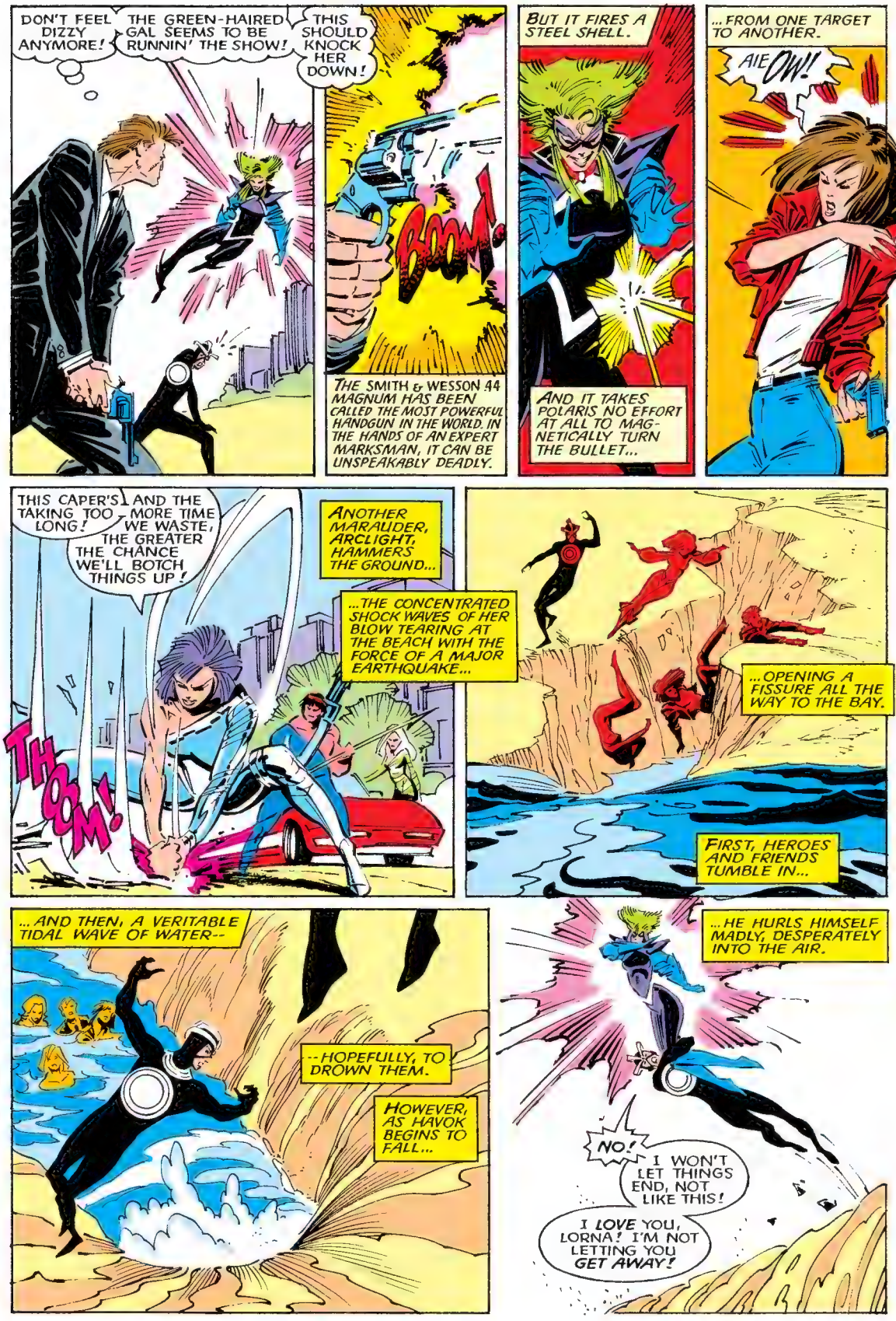
LONG BEFORE THE WHITE MAN'S PRESENCE TAINTED THIS LAND, IT WAS OUR DOMAIN-- ITS PEOPLE, WHOM YOU CALL "INDIANS," OUR RIGHTFUL PREY!
AND OUR MASTER HAS PROMISED...
... IT SHALL BE SO AGAIN!
MY VEST-- AFLAME!
BEST TO PLACE IT...
... WHERE IT WILL DO THE MOST GOOD!
BE OF STOUT HEART, WIND-RIDER!
NAZÉ!
THEY SNEER AT US "MORTALS." YET, AS YOU CAN SEE...
...THEY BOTH BURN...
... AND BLEED!
BY THE SHADOW, OLD MAN, I'LL HAVE YOUR SOUL!
NOT WHILE THERE IS BREATH IN ME...
... TO STOP YOU!
BEST YOU HAD FLED THE OTHER WAY, WOMAN, AS FAST AND FRIGHTENED AS YOUR LEGS COULD RUN!
YOUR FOOL'S COURAGE HAS SEALED YOUR DOOM!
BRIGHT LADY--!
MY CLAWS CAN REND STONE.
FEEL HOW MUCH WORSE THEY CAN DO TO MERE FLESH!
IN SPITE OF HERSELF, STORM SCREAMS-- BACK GONE HOT AND WET WITH BLOOD, DEMON'S POISON SEARING THE WOUNDS WITH ACID FIRE--

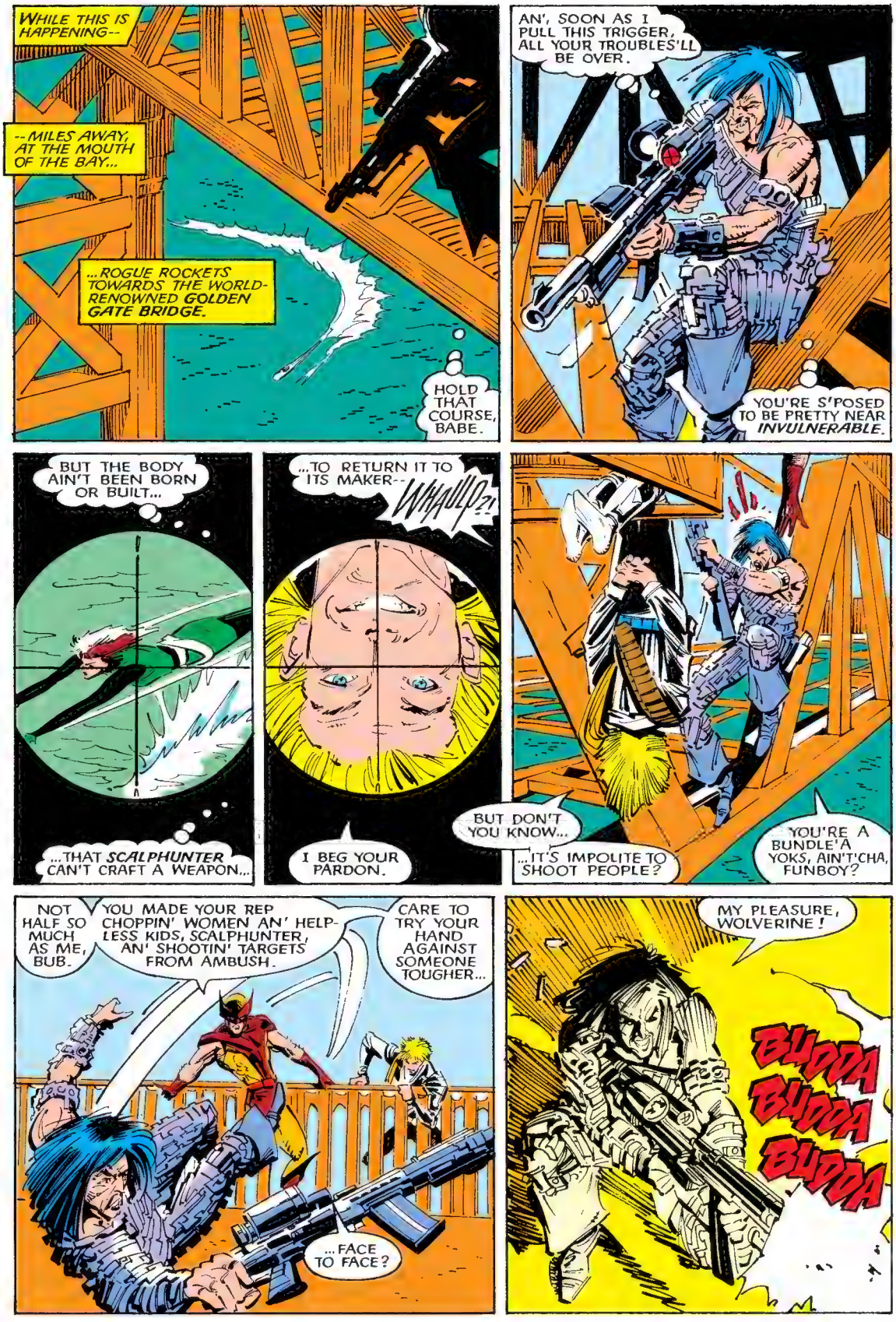
-- BUT SHE DOES NOT LET GO.
SO MANY WAYS TO SLAY...
...BUT THE BEST IS TO STEAL THE LIFE-FORCE--
-- REDUCE THE BODY TO A WITHERED, MUMMIFIED HUSK...
... AND ENSLAVE THE SOUL FOREVER!
NEVER BOAST, SHADOW-SPAWN--
--TILL YOUR BATTLE'S WON...
...YOUR FOES WELL AND TRULY SLAIN!
NAZE-- AGAIN!
BLAZING TUMBLEWEED-- BLESS HIM-- THE FOLIAGE HERE... SO DRY... HE'S SET THE ENTIRE HOLLOW ALIGHT!
EYE KILLER...
...HAS FOR-GOTTEN...
...ABOUT ME--
-- FEEL SO WEAK--
--EVERY THOUGHT AN EFFORT--
--NO SPEED...
... LESS STRENGTH...
... BUT, BY ALL I HOLD SACRED...
... I SHALL NOT BE FOUND WANTING!
IF THE FIRE IS WHAT THESE HORRORS FEAR...
... LET FLAMES CONSUME THEM!

HÉYA--HOKAHEY!
THAT'S THE SPIRIT, ORORO. I KNEW YOU COULDN'T BE BEAT!
THIS SHOULD FINISH THE JOB.
SCREAM PRETTY NICE, DON'T THEY?
ROAMED FREE, THEY DID, IN THE OLD DAYS--WHEN A BODY NEEDED FLINT AND STEEL, OR TWO STICKS RUBBIN' TOGETHER TO LIGHT A FIRE.
NOW, A MATCH IS ALL IT TAKES.
AIN'T THE MODERN WORLD WONDERFUL?
YOU OKAY?
ALIVE.
HURT...
...BUT WHOLE.
HAD I MY POWERS...
...YOU COULD'A FRIED 'EM WITH LIGHTNING...
...OR BLOWN 'EM AWAY WITH A WIND.
BUT FORGE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN RESTORE 'EM.
THAT IS WHY I SEEK HIM.
YOU GOT YOUR REASONS, I GOT MINE.
EYE KILLERS, THEY WERE BANISHED TO THE SPIRIT-LANDS AN AGE AGO. BUT THE WALLS BETWEEN THERE AN' HERE ARE BREAKIN' DOWN.
THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING. LOTS WORSE'LL COME THROUGH, TILL THE WORLD'S TORN TO BITS AN' CAST BACK INTO CHAOS.
FORGE IS S'POSED TO KEEP THAT FROM HAPPENING.
'PEARS TO ME, THOUGH, HE'S DECIDED TO WORK THE OTHER WAY-- AN' THROW THE GATES OPEN WIDE!
IF SO, SHAMAN...
...I SWEAR TO STOP HIM.
THAT'S ALL I ASK, STORM...
...ALL THAT'S DESIRED.

MEANWHILE, BACK WHERE WE LEFT OFF...
I'M SHOCKED, X-MEN-- REALLY HURT--
--THAT YOU'D THINK I COULD BE SO EASILY DEFEATED.
LORNA-- WHY
UHNFF!
GET TO THE CAR!
RADIO FOR BACK-UP-- MAYBE SOME OF THE OTHER X-MEN--!
SORRY, Lt. MORRELL.
THAT, I CANNOT ALLOW!
POLARIS IS CALLED, "MISTRESS OF MAGNETISM"--
--WITH GOOD REASON.
BUT AS SHE MAKES EVERY PIECE OF FERROUS METAL IN BREE MORRELL'S CAR LITERALLY EXPLODE...
...SHE LEAVES HERSELF MOMENTARILY VULNERABLE TO PSYLOCKE...
...WHO DOESN'T WASTE THE OPPORTUNITY.
SOMETHING FAMILIAR ABOUT THE PATTERN OF HER THOUGHTS--
--SHE ISN'T ALONE INSIDE HER SKULL--
--IF I CAN ISOLATE THE INTRUDER PSYCHE--
?!?
ALEX??
WHERE AM I, WHY AM I DRESSED LIKE THIS--
--WHAT THE HECK'S GOING ON?!!
YOU HAVE BEEN POSSESSED, POLARIS...
...BY THE PSYCHIC MARAUDER KNOWN AS MALICE--
OH!?!
WORLD SPINNING--
--HONEY, YOU GOTTA HELP US!
FIGHT MALICE'S INFLUENCE, STAY FREE!


VERY IMPRESSIVE, VERTIGO.
I MAKE 'EM SICK, HARPOON.
YOU AN' MALICE MAKE 'EM DEAD.
THEY'RE REELING LIKE LUBBERS CAUGHT ON THE OPEN SEA, AT THE HEIGHT OF A WINTER GALE.
THAT'S MY GUY YOU'RE HURTING, CREEPS. THAT'S A BIG MISTAKE!
WHUA...
...WHAT AM I SAYING...?
THE MISTAKE...
...IS IN LETTING OTHERS...
...DO MY DIRTY WORK FOR ME.
HAVOK IS MINE, MARAUDERS.
YOU CAN DISPOSE OF THE REST.
SUCH HEART-- SUCH THANKS--
--FOR SAVING MALICE.
BETTER, PERHAPS, TO HAVE LEFT WELL ENOUGH ALONE...
...AND LET THE X-MEN'S MIND-WITCH RID US OF HER!
BUT SHE IS CHIEF...
...AND HARPOON IS BLOOD-SWORN TO OBEY.
HARPOON'S SPEAR--
--WHEN HE THROWS IT, HIS MUTANT POWER SOMEHOW TRANS-MUTES STEEL TO ENERGY--
--BUT IF I CAN COUNTER WITH AN ENERGY SHOT OF MY OWN...
... MAYBE THE ONE'LL CANCEL OUT THE OTHER--
VOOP!
--BINGO!
SKABAM

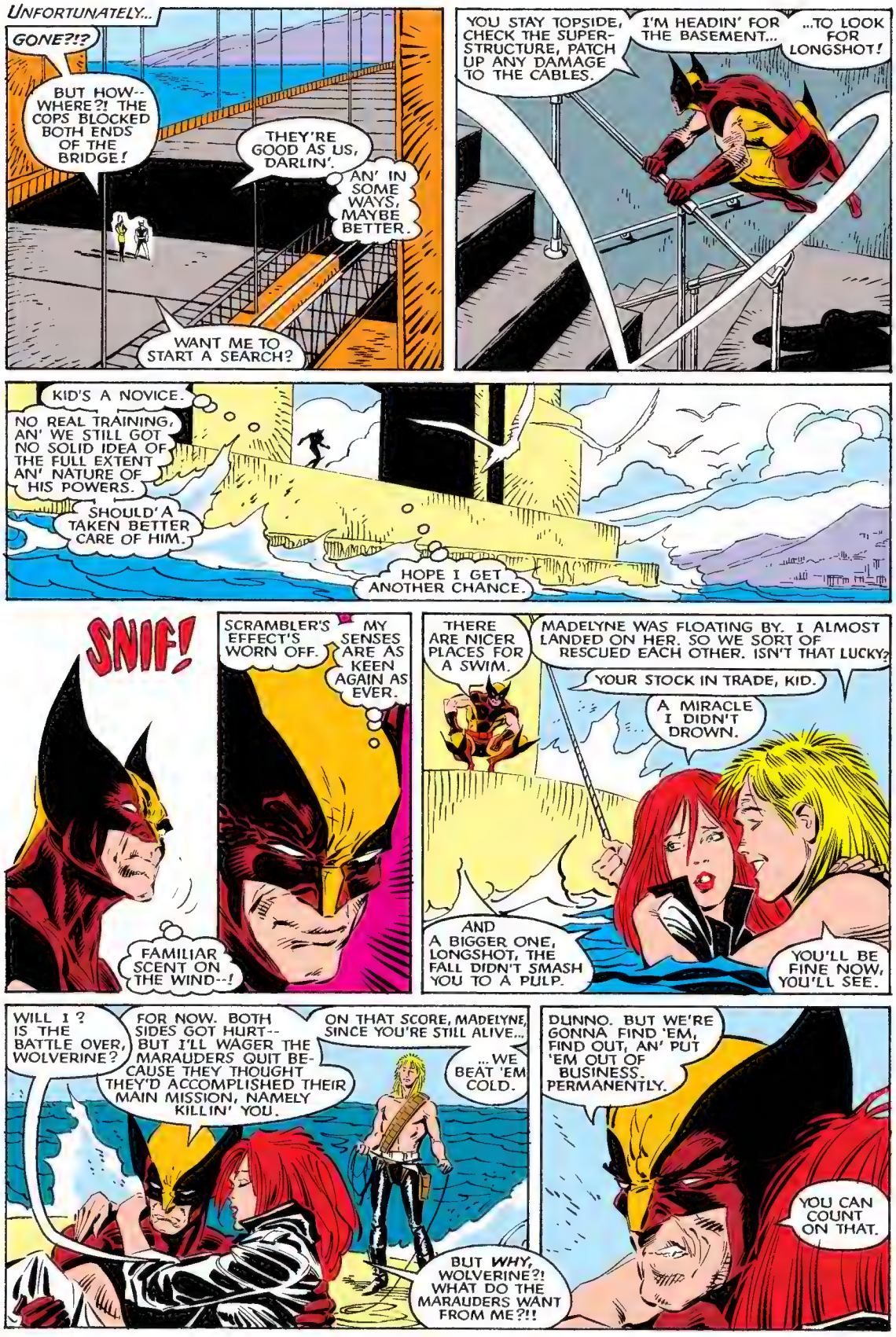

DON'T FEEL DIZZY ANYMORE!
THE GREEN-HAIRED GAL SEEMS TO BE RUNNIN' THE SHOW!
THIS SHOULD KNOCK HER DOWN!
BOOM!
THE SMITH & WESSON 44 MAGNUM HAS BEEN CALLED THE MOST POWERFUL HANDGUN IN THE WORLD. IN THE HANDS OF AN EXPERT MARKSMAN, IT CAN BE UNSPEAKABLY DEADLY.
BUT IT FIRES A STEEL SHELL.
AND IT TAKES POLARIS NO EFFORT AT ALL TO MAGNETICALLY TURN THE BULLET...
...FROM ONE TARGET TO ANOTHER.
AIEE OW!
THIS CAPER'S TAKING TOO LONG!
AND THE MORE TIME WE WASTE, THE GREATER THE CHANCE WE'LL BOTCH THINGS UP!
ANOTHER MARAUDER, ARCLIGHT, HAMMERS THE GROUND...
...THE CONCENTRATED SHOCK WAVES OF HER BLOW TEARING AT THE BEACH WITH THE FORCE OF A MAJOR EARTHQUAKE...
THOOM!
...OPENING A FISSURE ALL THE WAY TO THE BAY.
FIRST, HEROES AND FRIENDS TUMBLE IN...
...AND THEN, A VERITABLE TIDAL WAVE OF WATER--
--HOPEFULLY, TO DROWN THEM.
HOWEVER, AS HAVOK BEGINS TO FALL...
...HE HURLS HIMSELF MADLY, DESPERATELY INTO THE AIR.
NO!
I WON'T LET THINGS END, NOT LIKE THIS!
I LOVE YOU, LORNA! I'M NOT LETTING YOU GET AWAY!

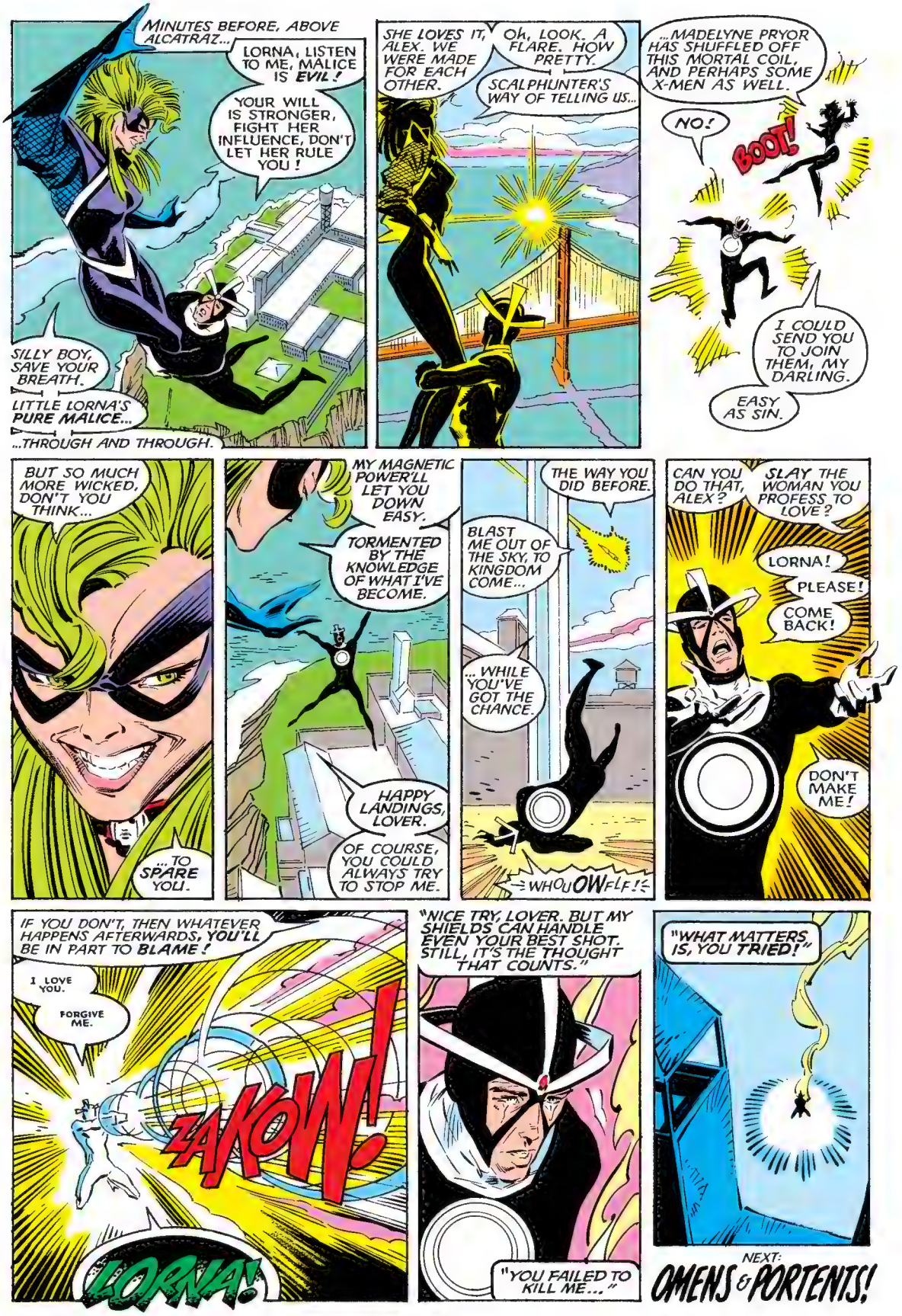

WHILE THIS IS HAPPENING--
--MILES AWAY, AT THE MOUTH OF THE BAY...
...ROGUE ROCKETS TOWARDS THE WORLD-RENOWNED GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE.
HOLD THAT COURSE, BABE.
AN', SOON AS I PULL THIS TRIGGER, ALL YOUR TROUBLES'LL BE OVER.
YOU'RE S'POSED TO BE PRETTY NEAR INVULNERABLE.
BUT THE BODY AIN'T BEEN BORN OR BUILT...
...THAT SCALPHUNTER CAN'T CRAFT A WEAPON...
...TO RETURN IT TO ITS MAKER--
WHAUUP?!
I BEG YOUR PARDON.
BUT DON'T YOU KNOW...
...IT'S IMPOLITE TO SHOOT PEOPLE?
YOU'RE A BUNDLE'A YOKS, AIN'T'CHA, FUNBOY?
NOT HALF SO MUCH AS ME, BUB.
YOU MADE YOUR REP CHOPPIN' WOMEN AN' HELPLESS KIDS, SCALPHUNTER, AN' SHOOTIN' TARGETS FROM AMBUSH.
CARE TO TRY YOUR HAND AGAINST SOMEONE TOUGHER...
...FACE TO FACE?
MY PLEASURE, WOLVERINE!
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA

Whoops!
LONGSHOT!
WHAT'RE YOU DOIN', BOY?!
VIP
VIP
YAP!
BLEOW!
WHY DIDN'T YOU DO AS YOU WERE TOLD-- STAY UNDER-COVER AND LET ME HANDLE THIS?!!
LONGSHOT!
BLAST AN' HADES-- I SHOULD NEVER HAVE BROUGHT THE KID ALONG WHEN I FOLLOWED THE MARAUDERS' TRAIL!
ONE X-MAN DOWN, ONE TO GO.
REMEMBER SCRAMBLER, UGLY-MAN?
I SCRAMBLE POWERS-- AND, IN YOUR CASE, I BET MY TOUCH...
...STEALS AWAY YOUR SUPER-SENSES, AND FAST-HEALING ABILITY!
THAT DON'T SLOW ME DOWN, PUNK.
SLAP!
OR MAKE ME ANY LESS STRONG.
BUT WHEN MY CLAWS RIP OUT YOUR THROAT, LOGAN, MY BOY...
SABRE-TOOTH!
...YOU'LL DIE!
JUST LIKE THOSE PUNY, PATHETIC, POWERLESS HUMANS YOU'VE SWORN TO PROTECT.

I'VE LOOKED FORWARD TO THIS MOMENT FOR A LONG TIME.
SLASH!
I MEAN TO ENJOY IT--
--SAVOR THIS KILL, ABOVE ALL OTHERS--
--TO THE FULLEST!
KRAK!
AUGH! MY HAND!!
IT'S BROKE!!
ALWAYS BEEN YOUR PROBLEM, BUB --ALL MUSCLE, NO MIND.
I'M MORE THAN A MUTANT, REMEMBER?
MY BONES ARE LACED WITH ADAMANTIUM.
SOK!
THEY CAN'T BE BROKE. YOU'D HAVE A GENTLER TIME PUNCHIN' STEEL!
SCRAMBLER CAN'T AFFECT THEM!
HE CAN'T AFFECT MY CLAWS.
SNIKT!
CATCH, SCRAMBLER!
MAYBE YOU CAN SCREW UP SABRE'S HEALING FACTOR, TOO. PUT HIM OUT OF HIS MISERY.
YOUR BONES MAY NOT BREAK, X-MAN-- BUT YOUR FLESH'LL STILL BLEED!
AN' WHEN I'M DONE...
...THERE WON'T BE A PIECE OF IT LEFT!
JAM JAM JAM

EXPLOSIVE SHELLS!
SHRAPNEL TEARIN' AT THE BRIDGE, AS WELL AS ME!
GOT NO IDEA WHEN SCRAMBLER'S ZAP'LL WEAR OFF-- I CAN'T AFFORD ANY SOLID HITS.
VAM VAM VAM VAM
GOT NO CHOICE!
GOTTA RABBIT!
WHERE'S YOUR SMART MOUTH NOW, X-MAN?! YOU STILL THINK YOU'RE A MATCH FOR ME--OR YOUR PATHETIC OUTFIT FOR THE MARAUDERS?!!
VAM VAM VAM-klik!
MAGAZINE'S EMPTY.
NO SIGN OF ANY BODY, LIVE OR DEAD.
WONDER IF I GOT HIM?
NEXT TIME, I'LL USE "TRACKER" SHELLS...
...THAT'LL FOLLOW THEIR TARGET, NO MATTER WHERE HE RUNS OR HIDES.
NICE CATCH, DARLIN'.
LUCKY FOR YOU, SUGAR, AH HAPPENED TO BE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
LUCK HAD NOTHIN' TO DO WITH IT.
I KNEW YOU WERE NEARBY.
FIGURED YOU'D HEAR THE SHOOTIN'...
...SEE ME JUMP, AN' REACT ACCORDINGLY.
SOME BRASS, FELLA.
I GOT IT, I FLAUNT IT.
NOW, LET'S HEAD BACK AN' NAIL THOSE JOKERS.


UNFORTUNATELY...
GONE?!?
BUT HOW-- WHERE?! THE COPS BLOCKED BOTH ENDS OF THE BRIDGE!
THEY'RE GOOD AS US, DARLIN'.
AN' IN SOME WAYS, MAYBE BETTER.
WANT ME TO START A SEARCH?
YOU STAY TOPSIDE, CHECK THE SUPER-STRUCTURE, PATCH UP ANY DAMAGE TO THE CABLES.
I'M HEADIN' FOR THE BASEMENT...
...TO LOOK FOR LONGSHOT!
KID'S A NOVICE.
NO REAL TRAINING, AN' WE STILL GOT NO SOLID IDEA OF THE FULL EXTENT AN' NATURE OF HIS POWERS.
SHOULD'A TAKEN BETTER CARE OF HIM.
HOPE I GET ANOTHER CHANCE.
SNIF!
SCRAMBLER'S EFFECT'S WORN OFF.
MY SENSES ARE AS KEEN AGAIN AS EVER.
FAMILIAR SCENT ON THE WIND--!
THERE ARE NICER PLACES FOR A SWIM.
MADELYNE WAS FLOATING BY. I ALMOST LANDED ON HER. SO WE SORT OF RESCUED EACH OTHER. ISN'T THAT LUCKY?
YOUR STOCK IN TRADE, KID.
A MIRACLE I DIDN'T DROWN.
AND A BIGGER ONE, LONGSHOT, THE FALL DIDN'T SMASH YOU TO A PULP.
YOU'LL BE FINE NOW, YOU'LL SEE.
WILL I ? IS THE BATTLE OVER, WOLVERINE?
FOR NOW. BOTH SIDES GOT HURT-- BUT I'LL WAGER THE MARAUDERS QUIT BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT THEY'D ACCOMPLISHED THEIR MAIN MISSION, NAMELY KILLIN' YOU.
ON THAT SCORE, MADELYNE, SINCE YOU'RE STILL ALIVE...
...WE BEAT 'EM COLD.
BUT WHY, WOLVERINE?! WHAT DO THE MARAUDERS WANT FROM ME?!!
DUNNO. BUT WE'RE GONNA FIND 'EM, FIND OUT, AN' PUT 'EM OUT OF BUSINESS. PERMANENTLY.
YOU CAN COUNT ON THAT.


MINUTES BEFORE, ABOVE ALCATRAZ...
LORNA, LISTEN TO ME, MALICE IS EVIL!
YOUR WILL IS STRONGER, FIGHT HER INFLUENCE, DON'T LET HER RULE YOU!
SILLY BOY, SAVE YOUR BREATH.
LITTLE LORNA'S PURE MALICE...
...THROUGH AND THROUGH.
SHE LOVES IT, ALEX. WE WERE MADE FOR EACH OTHER.
OH, LOOK. A FLARE. HOW PRETTY.
SCALPHUNTER'S WAY OF TELLING US...
...MADELYNE PRYOR HAS SHUFFLED OFF THIS MORTAL COIL, AND PERHAPS SOME X-MEN AS WELL.
NO!
BOOT!
I COULD SEND YOU TO JOIN THEM, MY DARLING.
EASY AS SIN.
BUT SO MUCH MORE WICKED, DON'T YOU THINK...
...TO SPARE YOU.
MY MAGNETIC POWER'LL LET YOU DOWN EASY.
TORMENTED BY THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT I'VE BECOME.
HAPPY LANDINGS, LOVER.
OF COURSE, YOU COULD ALWAYS TRY TO STOP ME.
THE WAY YOU DID BEFORE.
BLAST ME OUT OF THE SKY, TO KINGDOM COME...
...WHILE YOU'VE GOT THE CHANCE.
WHOUOWFLF!
CAN YOU DO THAT, ALEX?
SLAY THE WOMAN YOU PROFESS TO LOVE?
LORNA!
PLEASE!
COME BACK!
DON'T MAKE ME!
IF YOU DON'T, THEN WHATEVER HAPPENS AFTERWARDS, YOU'LL BE IN PART TO BLAME!
I LOVE YOU.
FORGIVE ME.
ZAKOW!
LORNA!
"NICE TRY, LOVER. BUT MY SHIELDS CAN HANDLE EVEN YOUR BEST SHOT. STILL, IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS."
"YOU FAILED TO KILL ME..."
"WHAT MATTERS IS, YOU TRIED!"
NEXT:
OMENS & PORTENTS!

MARVEL
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
TM
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75¢ US
95¢ CAN
223
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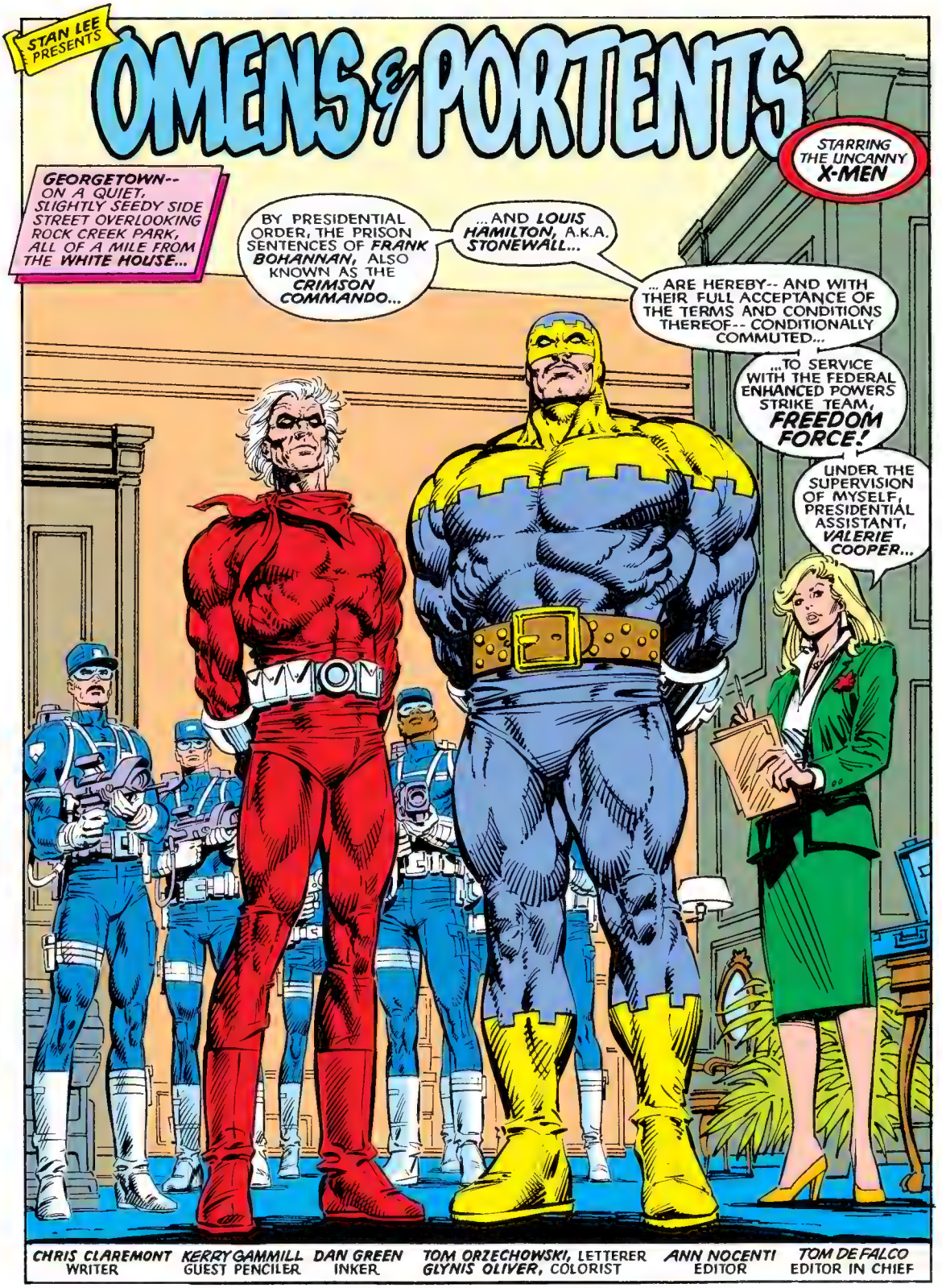
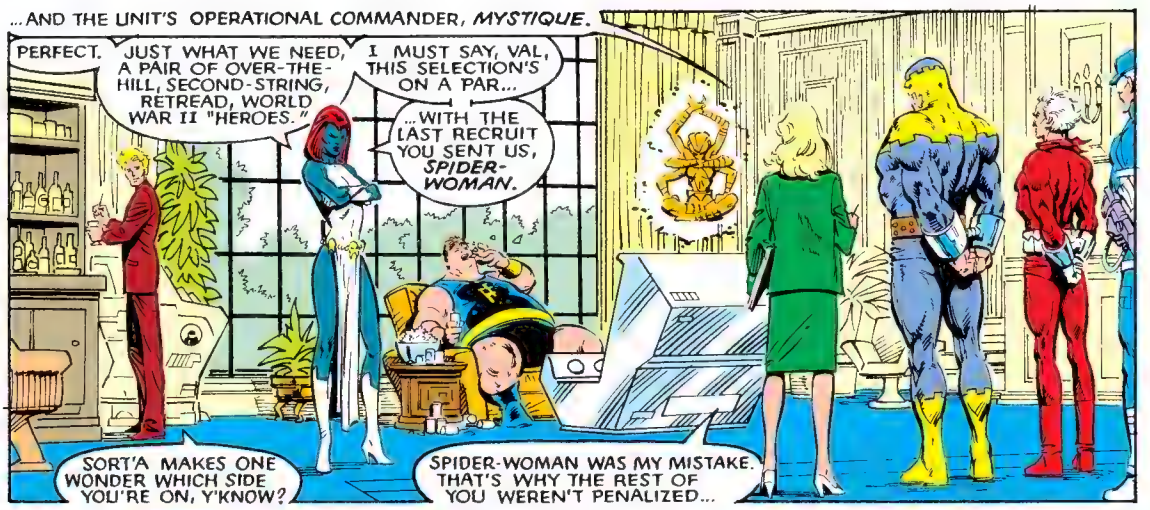

STAN LEE PRESENTS
OMENS & PORTENTS
STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
GEORGETOWN-- ON A QUIET, SLIGHTLY SEEDY SIDE STREET OVERLOOKING ROCK CREEK PARK, ALL OF A MILE FROM THE WHITE HOUSE...
BY PRESIDENTIAL ORDER, THE PRISON SENTENCES OF FRANK BOHANNAN, ALSO KNOWN AS THE CRIMSON COMMANDO...
...AND LOUIS HAMILTON, A.K.A. STONEWALL...
...ARE HEREBY-- AND WITH THEIR FULL ACCEPTANCE OF THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS THEREOF-- CONDITIONALLY COMMUTED...
...TO SERVICE WITH THE FEDERAL ENHANCED POWERS STRIKE TEAM, FREEDOM FORCE!
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF MYSELF, PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT, VALERIE COOPER...

CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER | KERRY GAMMILL GUEST PENCILER | DAN GREEN INKER | TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER | GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST | ANN NOCENTI EDITOR | TOM DE FALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

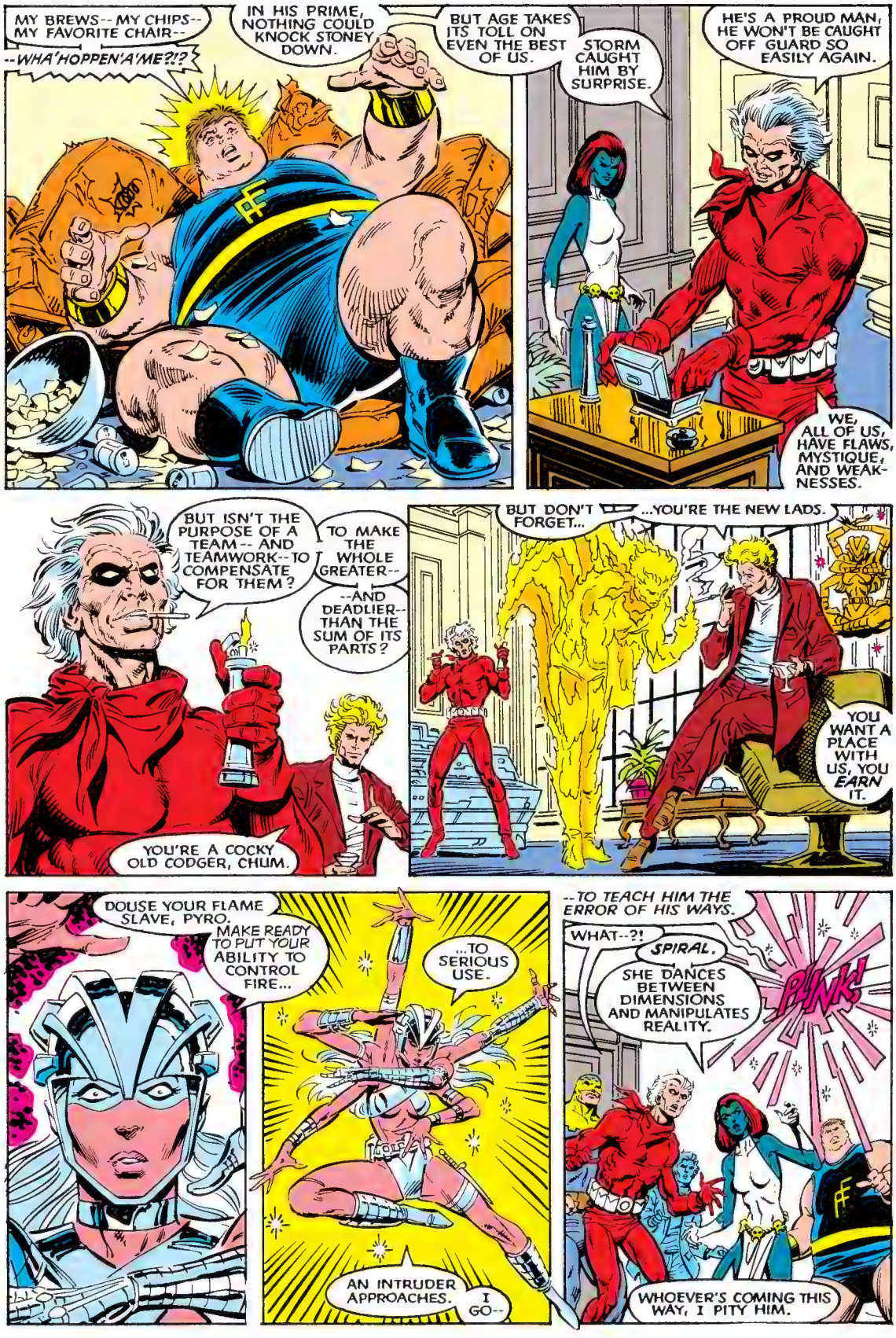
...AND THE UNIT'S OPERATIONAL COMMANDER, *MYSTIQUE*.

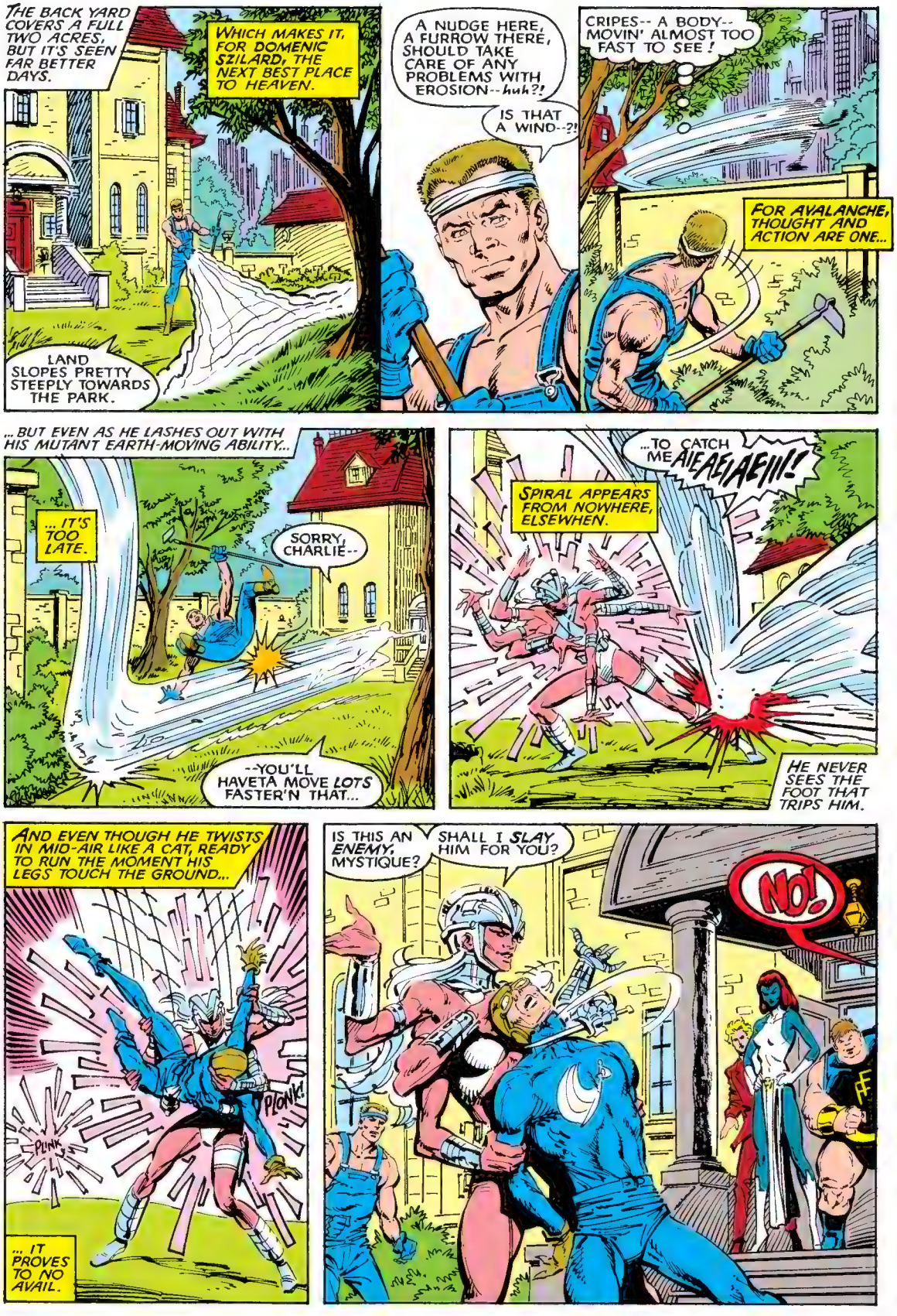

PERFECT.
JUST WHAT WE NEED, A PAIR OF OVER-THE-HILL, SECOND-STRING, RETREAD, WORLD WAR II "HEROES."
I MUST SAY, VAL, THIS SELECTION'S ON A PAR...
...WITH THE LAST RECRUIT YOU SENT US, *SPIDER-WOMAN.*
SORT'A MAKES ONE WONDER WHICH SIDE YOU'RE ON, Y'KNOW?
SPIDER-WOMAN WAS MY MISTAKE. THAT'S WHY THE REST OF YOU WEREN'T PENALIZED...

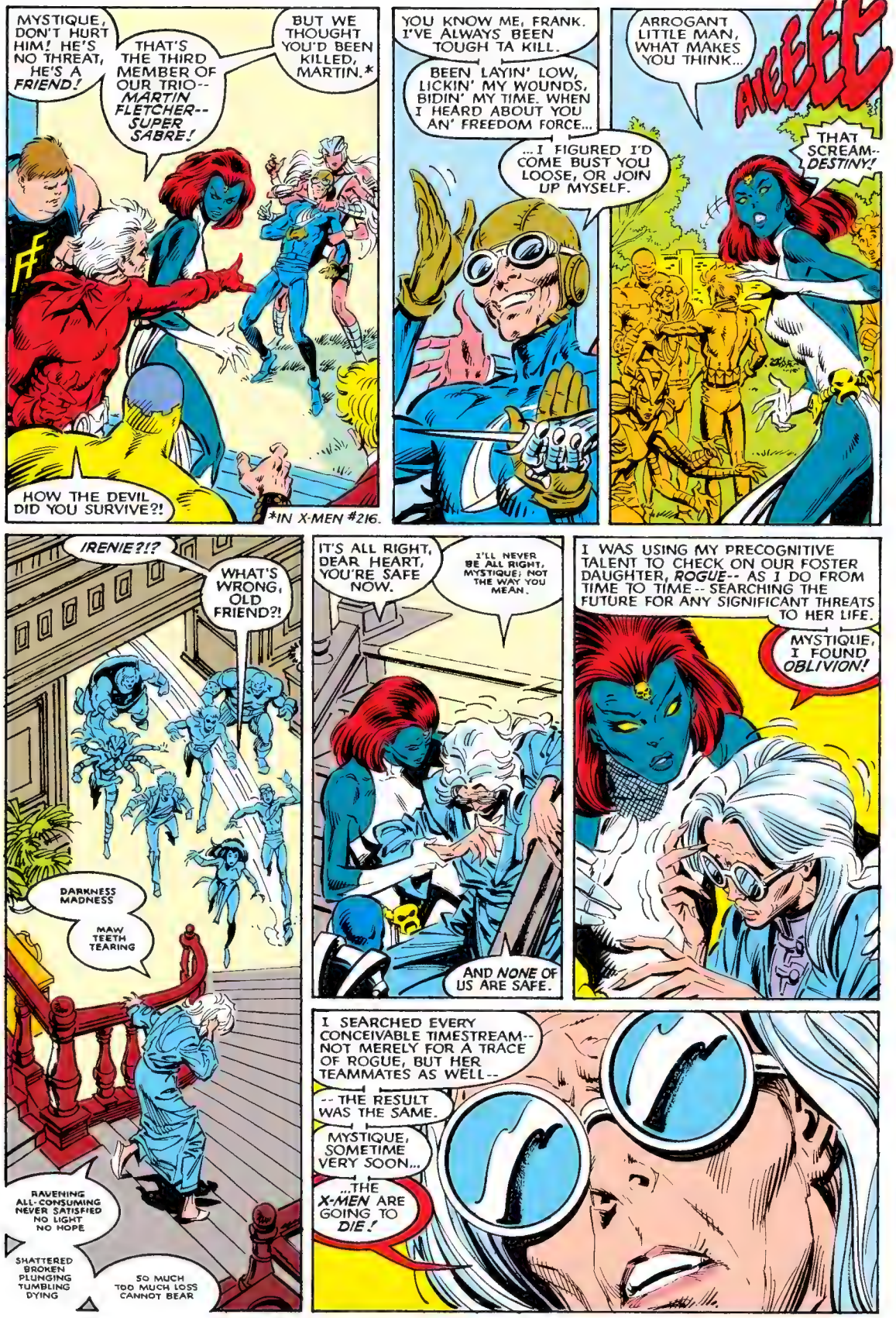
THE DEAL'S SIMPLE: WE PLAY THE FEDERAL GAME, WE GET PARDONED. ANY ONE OF US BREAKS PAROLE--BY COMMITTING A CRIME OR DESERTING--
-- EVERY-ONE ELSE PAYS THE PRICE.
TRY A DOUBLE CROSS, GENTLEMEN, YOU'LL ANSWER TO ME. WITH YOUR LIVES.

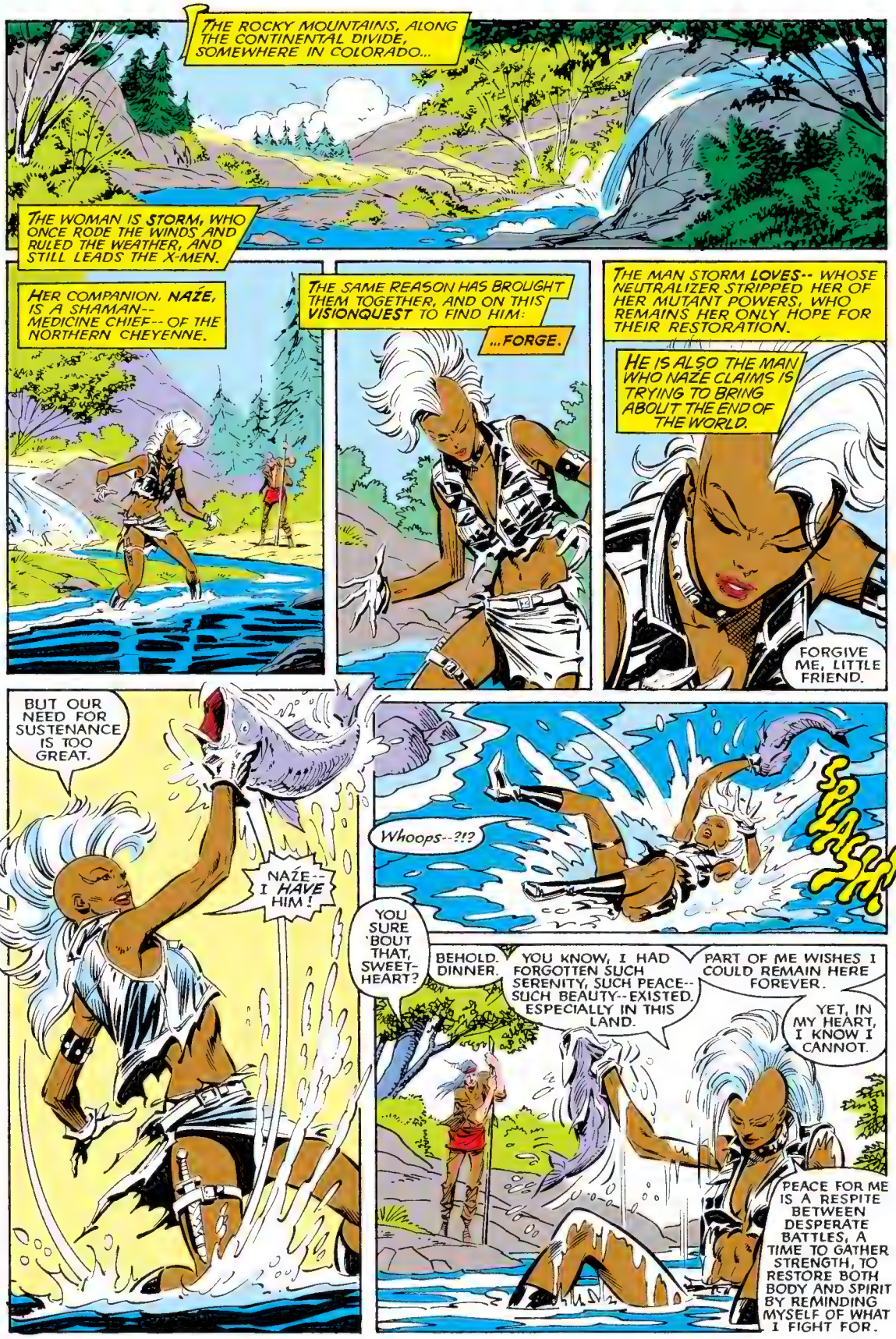
Y'ASK ME, BOSS, MY OLD GRAN IN WOOLAMALOO COULD TAKE THESE TWO.
MAN, PYRO, YOU AUSSIES THINK YORE GRAN'MA'S CAN TAKE *ANYBODY!*
I AIN'T NEVER MET A WHOLE COUNTRY...

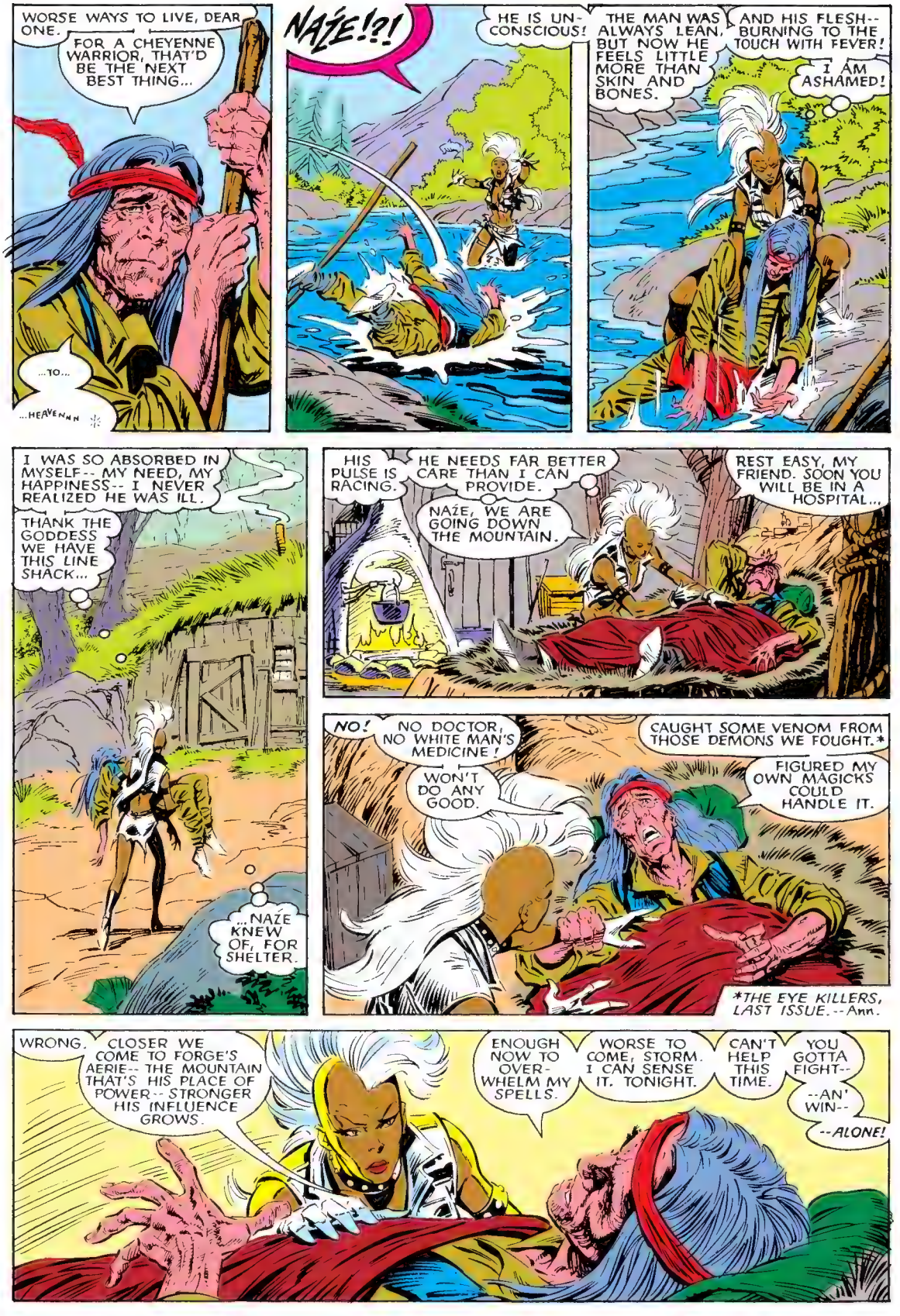
...YOU'RE S'POSED TO BE THE GUY WHO CAN'T BE KNOCKED DOWN.
ONLY *STORM* DID IT TO YA, TWICE!
SHOOT-- ANYTHING THAT SKINNY, SCRAWNY X-MAN SKIRT CAN DO...

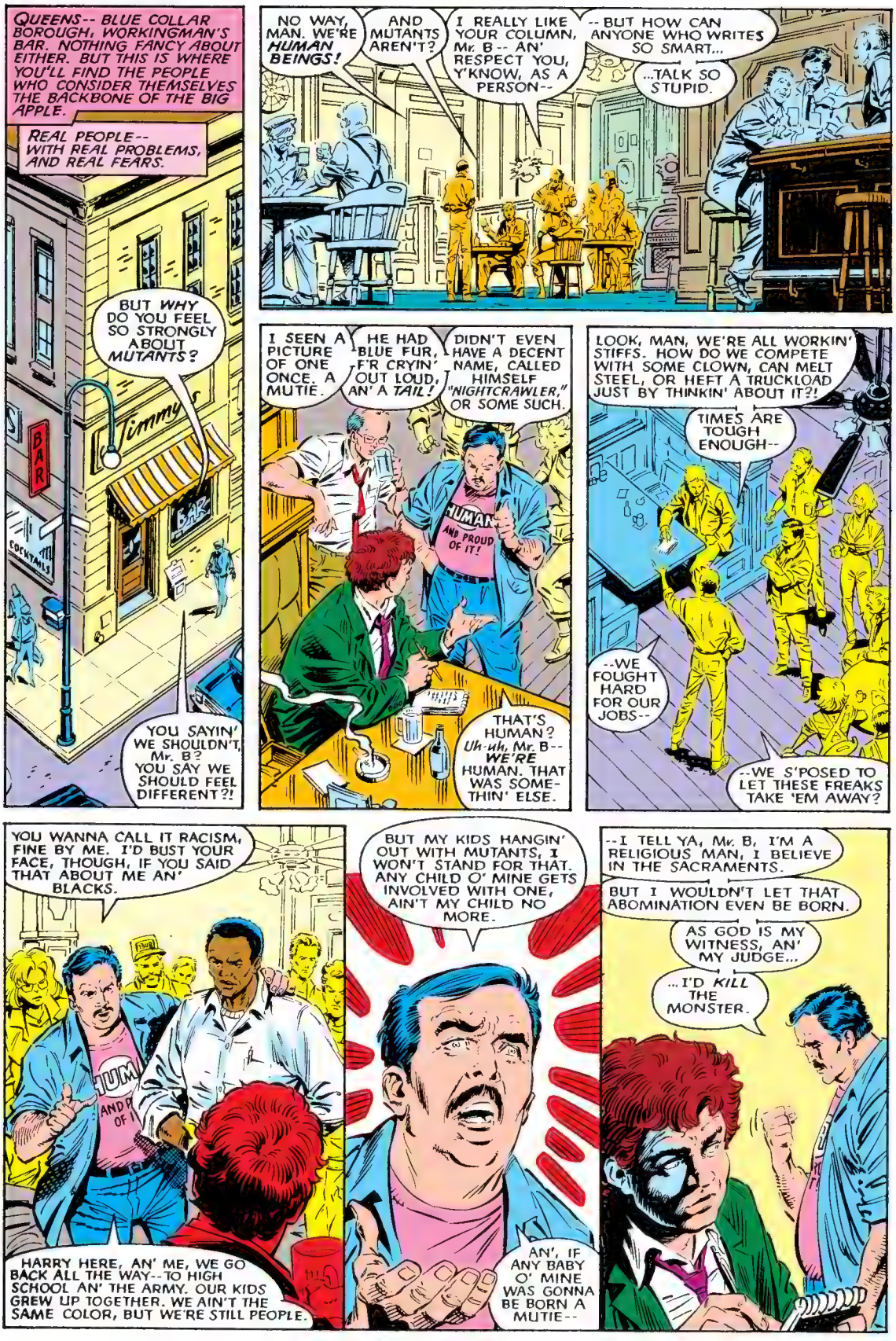

MY BREWS-- MY CHIPS-- MY FAVORITE CHAIR--
--WHA'HOPPEN'A'ME?!?
IN HIS PRIME, NOTHING COULD KNOCK STONEY DOWN.
BUT AGE TAKES ITS TOLL ON EVEN THE BEST OF US.
STORM CAUGHT HIM BY SURPRISE.
HE'S A PROUD MAN, HE WON'T BE CAUGHT OFF GUARD SO EASILY AGAIN.
WE, ALL OF US, HAVE FLAWS, MYSTIQUE, AND WEAK-NESSES.
BUT ISN'T THE PURPOSE OF A TEAM -- AND TEAMWORK -- TO COMPENSATE FOR THEM?
TO MAKE THE WHOLE GREATER--
--AND DEADLIER-- THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS?
YOU'RE A COCKY OLD CODGER, CHUM.
BUT DON'T FORGET...
...YOU'RE THE NEW LADS.
YOU WANT A PLACE WITH US, YOU EARN IT.
DOUSE YOUR FLAME SLAVE, PYRO. MAKE READY TO PUT YOUR ABILITY TO CONTROL FIRE...
...TO SERIOUS USE.
AN INTRUDER APPROACHES.
I GO--
--TO TEACH HIM THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS.
WHAT--?!
SPIRAL.
SHE DANCES BETWEEN DIMENSIONS AND MANIPULATES REALITY.
PUNK!
WHOEVER'S COMING THIS WAY, I PITY HIM.

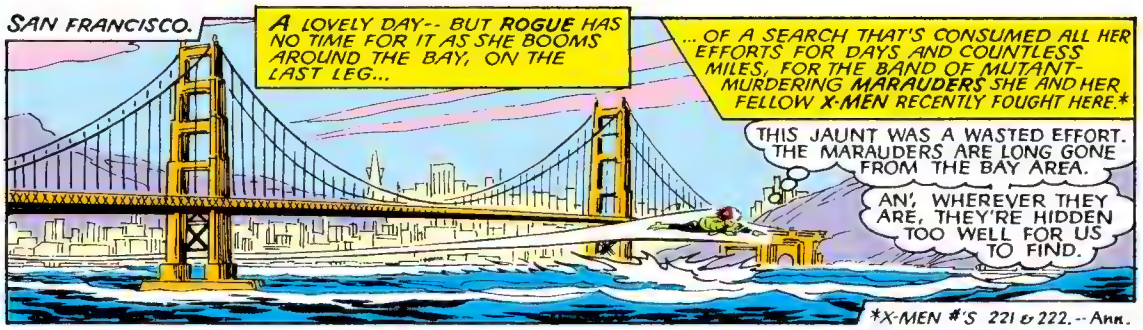

THE BACK YARD COVERS A FULL TWO ACRES, BUT IT'S SEEN FAR BETTER DAYS.
WHICH MAKES IT, FOR DOMENIC SZILARD, THE NEXT BEST PLACE TO HEAVEN.
LAND SLOPES PRETTY STEEPLY TOWARDS THE PARK.
A NUDGE HERE, A FURROW THERE, SHOULD TAKE CARE OF ANY PROBLEMS WITH EROSION--huh?!
IS THAT A WIND--?!
CRIPES-- A BODY-- MOVIN' ALMOST TOO FAST TO SEE!
FOR AVALANCHE, THOUGHT AND ACTION ARE ONE...
...BUT EVEN AS HE LASHES OUT WITH HIS MUTANT EARTH-MOVING ABILITY...
... IT'S TOO LATE.
SORRY, CHARLIE--
--YOU'LL HAVETA MOVE LOTS FASTER'N THAT...
SPIRAL APPEARS FROM NOWHERE, ELSEWHEN.
...TO CATCH ME AIEAEIAEIII!
HE NEVER SEES THE FOOT THAT TRIPS HIM.
AND EVEN THOUGH HE TWISTS IN MID-AIR LIKE A CAT, READY TO RUN THE MOMENT HIS LEGS TOUCH THE GROUND...
PLONK!
PLONK!
... IT PROVES TO NO AVAIL.
IS THIS AN ENEMY, MYSTIQUE?
SHALL I SLAY HIM FOR YOU?
NO!


MYSTIQUE, DON'T HURT HIM! HE'S NO THREAT, HE'S A FRIEND!
THAT'S THE THIRD MEMBER OF OUR TRIO-- MARTIN FLETCHER-- SUPER SABRE!
BUT WE THOUGHT YOU'D BEEN KILLED, MARTIN.*
HOW THE DEVIL DID YOU SURVIVE?!
*IN X-MEN #216.
YOU KNOW ME, FRANK. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN TOUGH TA KILL.
BEEN LAYIN' LOW, LICKIN' MY WOUNDS, BIDIN' MY TIME. WHEN I HEARD ABOUT YOU AN' FREEDOM FORCE...
...I FIGURED I'D COME BUST YOU LOOSE, OR JOIN UP MYSELF.
ARROGANT LITTLE MAN, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK...
AIEEEE
THAT SCREAM-- DESTINY!
IRENE?!?
WHAT'S WRONG, OLD FRIEND?!
DARKNESS MADNESS
MAW TEETH TEARING
RAVENING ALL-CONSUMING NEVER SATISFIED NO LIGHT NO HOPE
SHATTERED BROKEN PLUNGING TUMBLING DYING
SO MUCH TOO MUCH LOSS CANNOT BEAR
IT'S ALL RIGHT, DEAR HEART, YOU'RE SAFE NOW.
I'LL NEVER BE ALL RIGHT, MYSTIQUE; NOT THE WAY YOU MEAN.
AND NONE OF US ARE SAFE.
I WAS USING MY PRECOGNITIVE TALENT TO CHECK ON OUR FOSTER DAUGHTER, ROGUE-- AS I DO FROM TIME TO TIME-- SEARCHING THE FUTURE FOR ANY SIGNIFICANT THREATS TO HER LIFE.
MYSTIQUE, I FOUND OBLIVION!
I SEARCHED EVERY CONCEIVABLE TIMESTREAM-- NOT MERELY FOR A TRACE OF ROGUE, BUT HER TEAMMATES AS WELL--
-- THE RESULT WAS THE SAME.
MYSTIQUE, SOMETIME VERY SOON...
...THE X-MEN ARE GOING TO DIE!

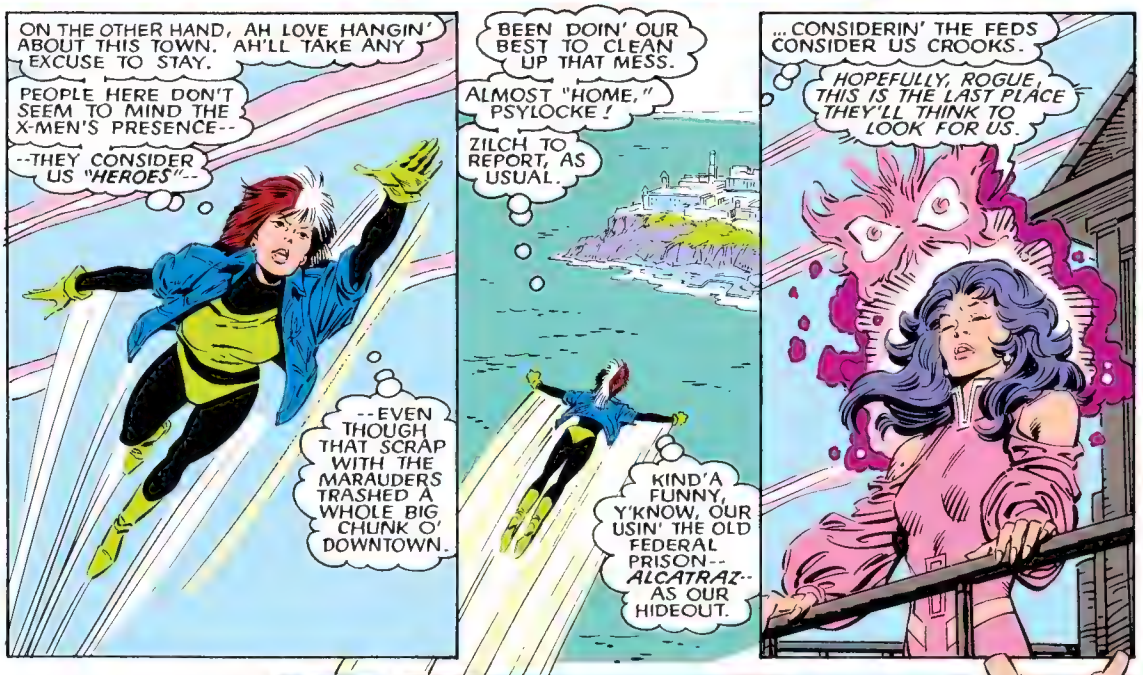

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS, ALONG THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, SOMEWHERE IN COLORADO...
THE WOMAN IS STORM, WHO ONCE RODE THE WINDS AND RULED THE WEATHER, AND STILL LEADS THE X-MEN.
HER COMPANION, NAZE, IS A SHAMAN-- MEDICINE CHIEF-- OF THE NORTHERN CHEYENNE.
THE SAME REASON HAS BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER, AND ON THIS VISIONQUEST TO FIND HIM:
...FORGE.
THE MAN STORM LOVES-- WHOSE NEUTRALIZER STRIPPED HER OF HER MUTANT POWERS, WHO REMAINS HER ONLY HOPE FOR THEIR RESTORATION.
HE IS ALSO THE MAN WHO NAZE CLAIMS IS TRYING TO BRING ABOUT THE END OF THE WORLD.
FORGIVE ME, LITTLE FRIEND.
BUT OUR NEED FOR SUSTENANCE IS TOO GREAT.
NAZE-- I HAVE HIM!
Whoops--?!?
SPLASH!
YOU SURE 'BOUT THAT, SWEET-HEART?
BEHOLD. DINNER.
YOU KNOW, I HAD FORGOTTEN SUCH SERENITY, SUCH PEACE-- SUCH BEAUTY--EXISTED. ESPECIALLY IN THIS LAND.
PART OF ME WISHES I COULD REMAIN HERE FOREVER.
YET, IN MY HEART, I KNOW I CANNOT.
PEACE FOR ME IS A RESPITE BETWEEN DESPERATE BATTLES, A TIME TO GATHER STRENGTH, TO RESTORE BOTH BODY AND SPIRIT BY REMINDING MYSELF OF WHAT I FIGHT FOR.

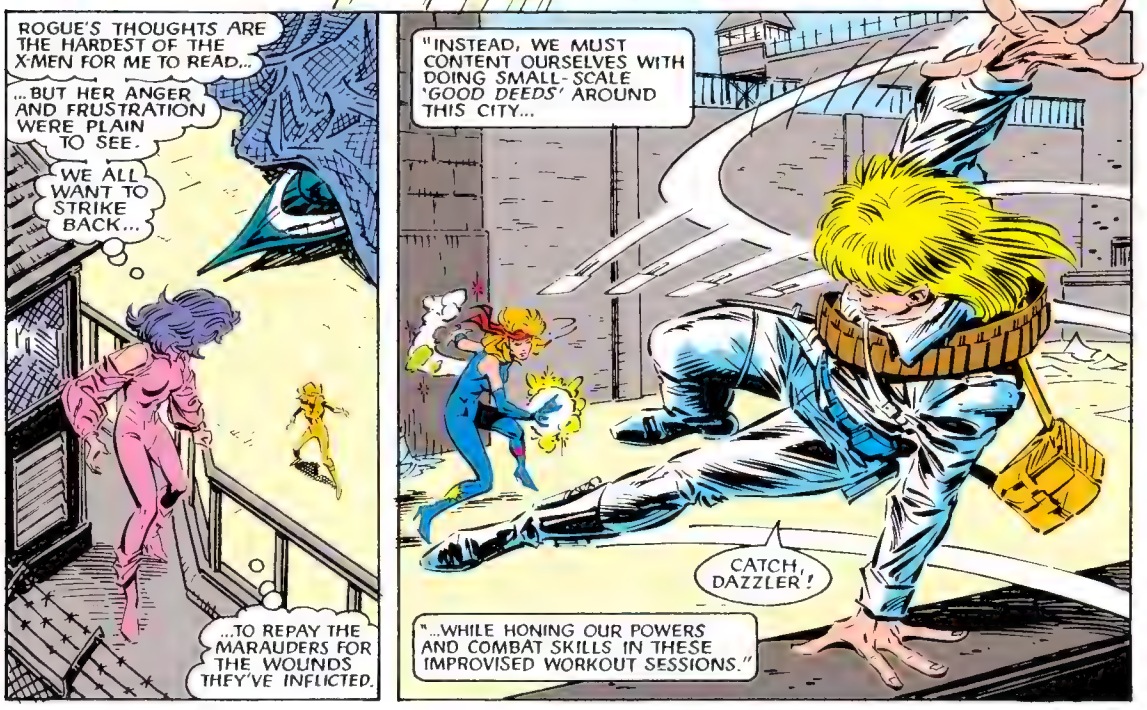

WORSE WAYS TO LIVE, DEAR ONE.
FOR A CHEYENNE WARRIOR, THAT'D BE THE NEXT BEST THING...
...TO...
...HEAVENNN
NAŹE!?!
HE IS UN-CONSCIOUS!
THE MAN WAS ALWAYS LEAN, BUT NOW HE FEELS LITTLE MORE THAN SKIN AND BONES.
AND HIS FLESH-- BURNING TO THE TOUCH WITH FEVER!
I AM ASHAMED!
I WAS SO ABSORBED IN MYSELF-- MY NEED, MY HAPPINESS-- I NEVER REALIZED HE WAS ILL.
THANK THE GODDESS WE HAVE THIS LINE SHACK...
...NAŹE KNEW OF, FOR SHELTER.
HIS PULSE IS RACING.
HE NEEDS FAR BETTER CARE THAN I CAN PROVIDE.
NAŹE, WE ARE GOING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.
REST EASY, MY FRIEND. SOON YOU WILL BE IN A HOSPITAL...
NO!
NO DOCTOR, NO WHITE MAN'S MEDICINE!
WON'T DO ANY GOOD.
CAUGHT SOME VENOM FROM THOSE DEMONS WE FOUGHT.*
FIGURED MY OWN MAGICKS COULD HANDLE IT.
*THE EYE KILLERS, LAST ISSUE.--Ann.
WRONG.
CLOSER WE COME TO FORGE'S AERIE-- THE MOUNTAIN THAT'S HIS PLACE OF POWER-- STRONGER HIS INFLUENCE GROWS.
ENOUGH NOW TO OVER-WHELM MY SPELLS.
WORSE TO COME, STORM. I CAN SENSE IT. TONIGHT.
CAN'T HELP THIS TIME.
YOU GOTTA FIGHT--
--AN' WIN--
--ALONE!

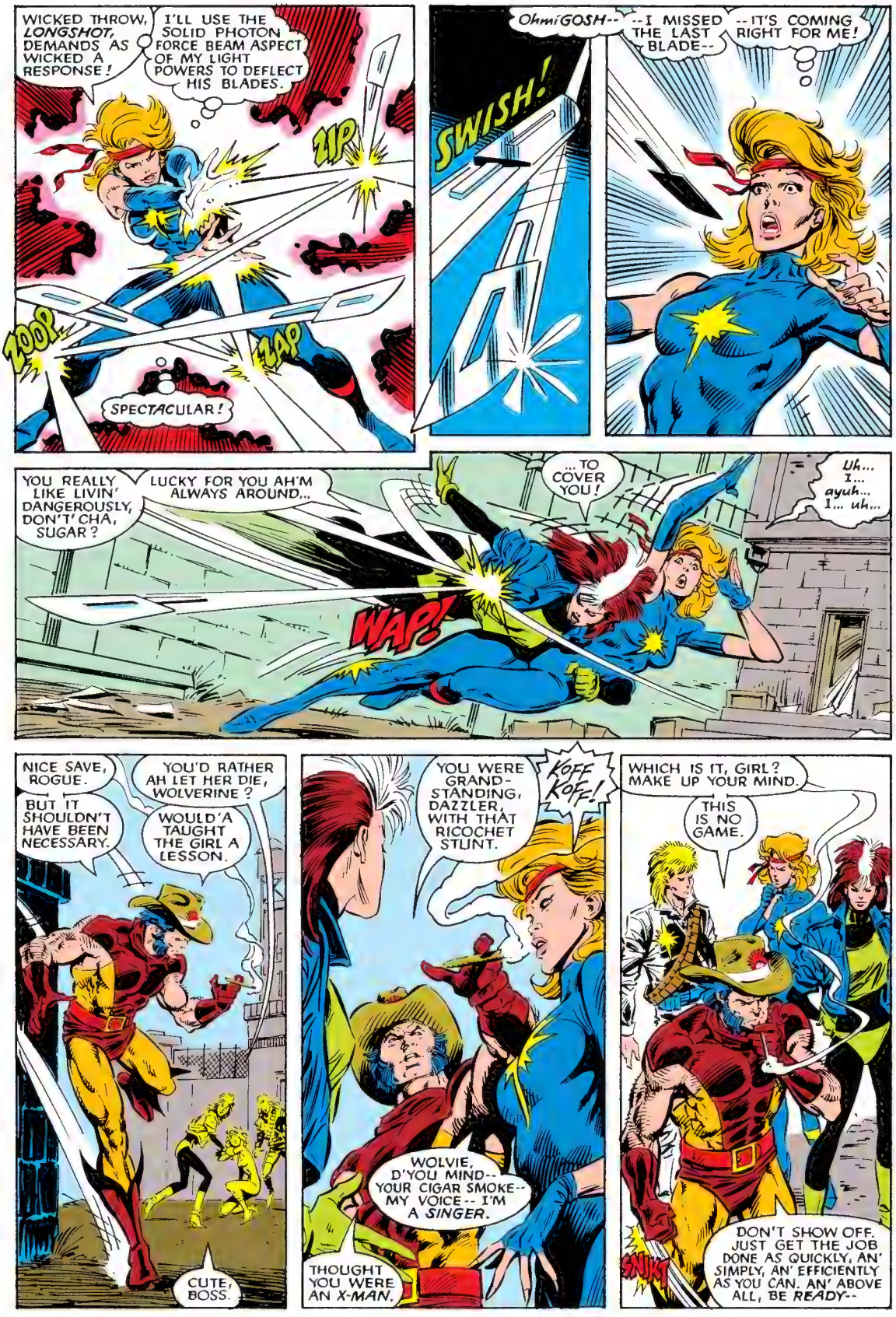

QUEENS-- BLUE COLLAR BOROUGH; WORKINGMAN'S BAR. NOTHING FANCY ABOUT EITHER. BUT THIS IS WHERE YOU'LL FIND THE PEOPLE WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES THE BACKBONE OF THE BIG APPLE.
REAL PEOPLE-- WITH REAL PROBLEMS, AND REAL FEARS.
BUT WHY DO YOU FEEL SO STRONGLY ABOUT MUTANTS?
Jimmy's
BAR
COCKTAILS
YOU SAYIN' WE SHOULDN'T, Mr. B? YOU SAY WE SHOULD FEEL DIFFERENT?!
NO WAY, MAN. WE'RE HUMAN BEINGS!
AND MUTANTS AREN'T?
I REALLY LIKE YOUR COLUMN, Mr. B -- AN' RESPECT YOU, Y'KNOW, AS A PERSON--
-- BUT HOW CAN ANYONE WHO WRITES SO SMART...
...TALK SO STUPID.
I SEEN A PICTURE OF ONE ONCE. A MUTIE.
HE HAD BLUE FUR, F'R CRYIN' OUT LOUD, AN' A TAIL!
DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A DECENT NAME, CALLED HIMSELF "NIGHTCRAWLER," OR SOME SUCH.
HUMAN AND PROUD OF IT!
THAT'S HUMAN? Uh-uh, Mr. B-- WE'RE HUMAN. THAT WAS SOME-THIN' ELSE.
LOOK, MAN, WE'RE ALL WORKIN' STIFFS. HOW DO WE COMPETE WITH SOME CLOWN, CAN MELT STEEL, OR HEFT A TRUCKLOAD JUST BY THINKIN' ABOUT IT?!
TIMES ARE TOUGH ENOUGH--
--WE FOUGHT HARD FOR OUR JOBS--
--WE S'POSED TO LET THESE FREAKS TAKE 'EM AWAY?
YOU WANNA CALL IT RACISM, FINE BY ME. I'D BUST YOUR FACE, THOUGH, IF YOU SAID THAT ABOUT ME AN' BLACKS.
HARRY HERE, AN' ME, WE GO BACK ALL THE WAY--TO HIGH SCHOOL AN' THE ARMY. OUR KIDS GREW UP TOGETHER. WE AIN'T THE SAME COLOR, BUT WE'RE STILL PEOPLE.
BUT MY KIDS HANGIN' OUT WITH MUTANTS, I WON'T STAND FOR THAT. ANY CHILD O' MINE GETS INVOLVED WITH ONE, AIN'T MY CHILD NO MORE.
AN', IF ANY BABY O' MINE WAS GONNA BE BORN A MUTIE--
--I TELL YA, Mr. B, I'M A RELIGIOUS MAN, I BELIEVE IN THE SACRAMENTS.
BUT I WOULDN'T LET THAT ABOMINATION EVEN BE BORN.
AS GOD IS MY WITNESS, AN' MY JUDGE...
...I'D KILL THE MONSTER.

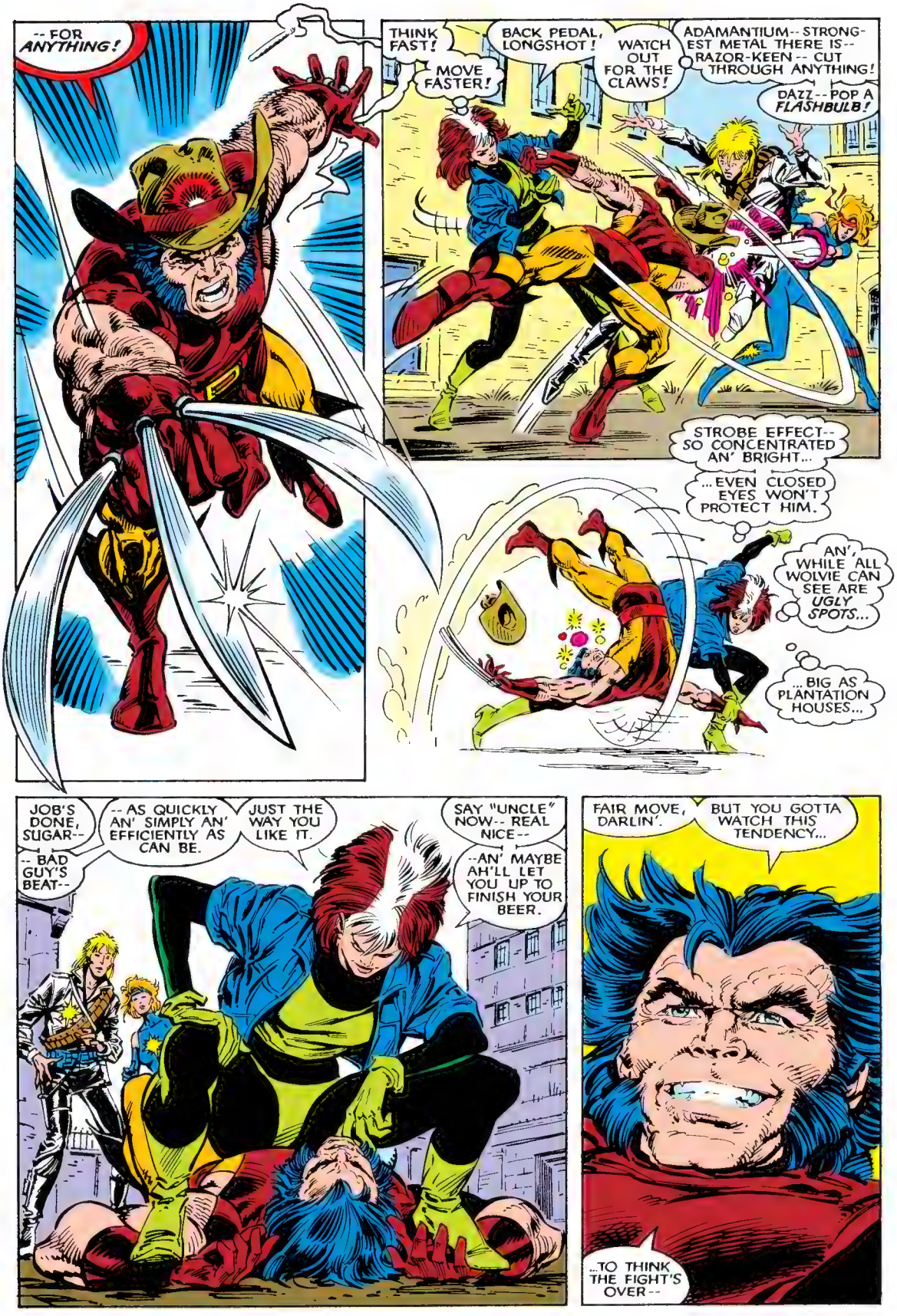

SAN FRANCISCO.
A LOVELY DAY-- BUT ROGUE HAS NO TIME FOR IT AS SHE BOOMS AROUND THE BAY, ON THE LAST LEG...
... OF A SEARCH THAT'S CONSUMED ALL HER EFFORTS FOR DAYS AND COUNTLESS MILES, FOR THE BAND OF MUTANT-MURDERING MARAUDERS SHE AND HER FELLOW X-MEN RECENTLY FOUGHT HERE.*
THIS JAUNT WAS A WASTED EFFORT. THE MARAUDERS ARE LONG GONE FROM THE BAY AREA.
AN', WHEREVER THEY ARE, THEY'RE HIDDEN TOO WELL FOR US TO FIND.

*X-MEN #'S 221 & 222.--Ann.

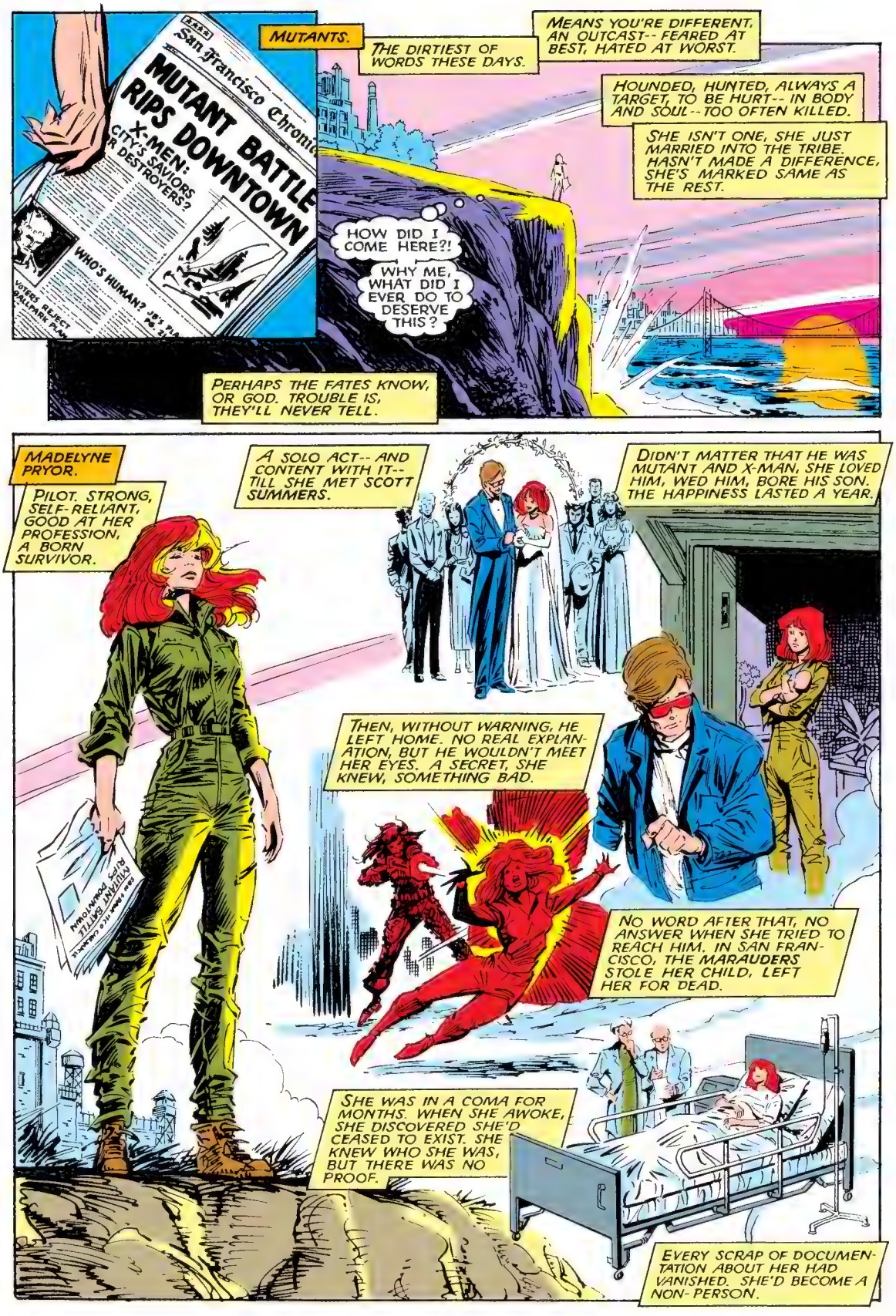

ON THE OTHER HAND, AH LOVE HANGIN' ABOUT THIS TOWN. AH'LL TAKE ANY EXCUSE TO STAY.
PEOPLE HERE DON'T SEEM TO MIND THE X-MEN'S PRESENCE--
--THEY CONSIDER US "HEROES"--
--EVEN THOUGH THAT SCRAP WITH THE MARAUDERS TRASHED A WHOLE BIG CHUNK O' DOWNTOWN.
BEEN DOIN' OUR BEST TO CLEAN UP THAT MESS.
ALMOST "HOME," PSYLOCKE!
ZILCH TO REPORT, AS USUAL.
KIND'A FUNNY, Y'KNOW, OUR USIN' THE OLD FEDERAL PRISON--ALCATRAZ--AS OUR HIDEOUT.
...CONSIDERIN' THE FEDS CONSIDER US CROOKS.
HOPEFULLY, ROGUE, THIS IS THE LAST PLACE THEY'LL THINK TO LOOK FOR US.


ROGUE'S THOUGHTS ARE THE HARDEST OF THE X-MEN FOR ME TO READ...
...BUT HER ANGER AND FRUSTRATION WERE PLAIN TO SEE.
WE ALL WANT TO STRIKE BACK...
...TO REPAY THE MARAUDERS FOR THE WOUNDS THEY'VE INFLICTED.
"INSTEAD, WE MUST CONTENT OURSELVES WITH DOING SMALL-SCALE 'GOOD DEEDS' AROUND THIS CITY...
CATCH, DAZZLER!
"...WHILE HONING OUR POWERS AND COMBAT SKILLS IN THESE IMPROVISED WORKOUT SESSIONS."


WICKED THROW, LONGSHOT, DEMANDS AS WICKED A RESPONSE!
I'LL USE THE SOLID PHOTON FORCE BEAM ASPECT OF MY LIGHT POWERS TO DEFLECT HIS BLADES.
ZIP
ZOOP
ZAP
SPECTACULAR!
OhmiGOSH--
SWISH!
--I MISSED THE LAST BLADE--
--IT'S COMING RIGHT FOR ME!
YOU REALLY LIKE LIVIN' DANGEROUSLY, DON'T'CHA, SUGAR?
LUCKY FOR YOU AH'M ALWAYS AROUND...
...TO COVER YOU!
Uh... I... ayuh... I... uh...
WAP!
NICE SAVE, ROGUE.
BUT IT SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN NECESSARY.
YOU'D RATHER AH LET HER DIE, WOLVERINE?
WOULD'A TAUGHT THE GIRL A LESSON.
CUTE, BOSS.
YOU WERE GRAND-STANDING, DAZZLER, WITH THAT RICOCHET STUNT.
KOFF KOFF!
WOLVIE, D'YOU MIND-- YOUR CIGAR SMOKE-- MY VOICE-- I'M A SINGER.
THOUGHT YOU WERE AN X-MAN.
WHICH IS IT, GIRL? MAKE UP YOUR MIND.
THIS IS NO GAME.
SNIKT
DON'T SHOW OFF. JUST GET THE JOB DONE AS QUICKLY, AN' SIMPLY, AN' EFFICIENTLY AS YOU CAN. AN' ABOVE ALL, BE READY--


-- FOR ANYTHING!
THINK FAST!
MOVE FASTER!
BACK PEDAL, LONGSHOT!
WATCH OUT FOR THE CLAWS!
ADAMANTIUM-- STRONGEST METAL THERE IS-- RAZOR-KEEN -- CUT THROUGH ANYTHING!
DAZZ-- POP A FLASHBULB!
STROBE EFFECT-- SO CONCENTRATED AN' BRIGHT...
...EVEN CLOSED EYES WON'T PROTECT HIM.
AN', WHILE ALL WOLVIE CAN SEE ARE UGLY SPOTS...
...BIG AS PLANTATION HOUSES...
JOB'S DONE, SUGAR--
-- BAD GUY'S BEAT--
-- AS QUICKLY AN' SIMPLY AN' EFFICIENTLY AS CAN BE.
JUST THE WAY YOU LIKE IT.
SAY "UNCLE" NOW-- REAL NICE--
--AN' MAYBE AH'LL LET YOU UP TO FINISH YOUR BEER.
FAIR MOVE, DARLIN'.
BUT YOU GOTTA WATCH THIS TENDENCY...
...TO THINK THE FIGHT'S OVER--

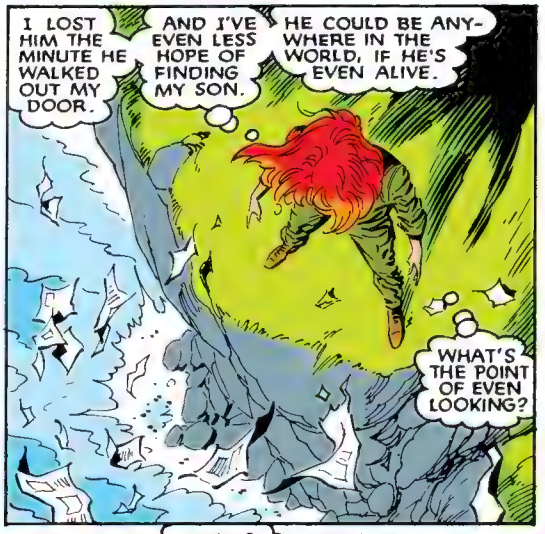
-- WHEN IT'S ONLY JUST BEGUN!
HEY!?!
YOUR TURN.
STOMP!
UNLESS YOU WANT TO TEST WHETHER YOUR PARTIAL INVULNERABILITY IS A MATCH FOR MY CLAWS?
UNCLE.
DARN IT.
FIGURED AH HAD YOU THIS TIME.
YUP.
CONFIDENCE IS FINE, ACTIN' COCKY'LL COST YOU.
DON'T FORGET, I'VE BEEN SCRAPPIN' LONGER'N YOU'VE BEEN ALIVE. YOU GOT A WAYS TO TRAVEL, GIRL, BEFORE YOU'RE EVEN CLOSE TO ME.
BUT YOU'RE LISTENING, ROGUE, YOU'RE LEARNING.
THERE'S HOPE FOR YOU YET.
WELL, HUSH MAH MOUTH! A COMPLIMENT AND A BREW! WILL WONDERS NEVER CEASE?
DON'T PUSH YOUR LUCK, KID.
ANY JOY ON TODAY'S SEARCH?
NOPE.
THAT'LL CHANGE. SOONER OR LATER, WE AN' THE MARAUDERS'LL SCRAP AGAIN.
SNAP!
CAN'T WAIT. WE OWE THOSE MURDERIN' BUTCHERS FOR THE HURTS THEY'VE DONE US.
SPEAKIN' O' HURTS, HOW'RE HAVOK AN' Ms. PRYOR DOIN'?
HOW DO YOU EXPECT? FOR THEM, IT'S AS THOUGH THEIR HEARTS HAVE BEEN TORN OUT-- MAYBE FOREVER!

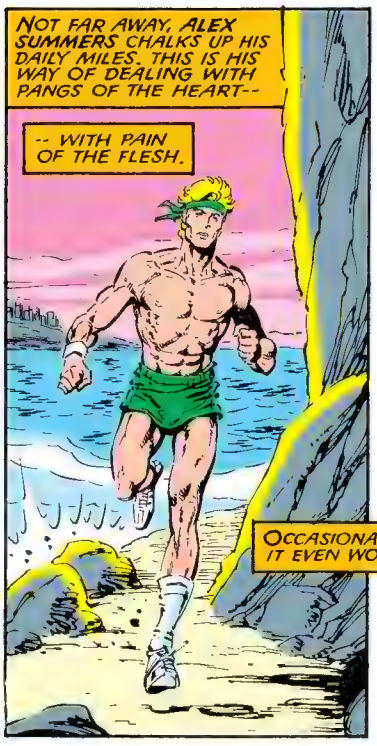

MUTANTS.
THE DIRTIEST OF WORDS THESE DAYS.
MEANS YOU'RE DIFFERENT, AN OUTCAST-- FEARED AT BEST, HATED AT WORST.
HOUNDED, HUNTED, ALWAYS A TARGET, TO BE HURT-- IN BODY AND SOUL--TOO OFTEN KILLED.
SHE ISN'T ONE, SHE JUST MARRIED INTO THE TRIBE. HASN'T MADE A DIFFERENCE, SHE'S MARKED SAME AS THE REST.
San Francisco Chronicle
MUTANT BATTLE RIPS DOWNTOWN
X-MEN: CITY'S SAVIORS OR DESTROYERS?
WHO'S HUMAN? JOE'S PLA
VOTERS REJECT DALMARK PLAN
HOW DID I COME HERE?!
WHY ME, WHAT DID I EVER DO TO DESERVE THIS?
PERHAPS THE FATES KNOW, OR GOD. TROUBLE IS, THEY'LL NEVER TELL.
MADELYNE PRYOR.
PILOT. STRONG, SELF-RELIANT, GOOD AT HER PROFESSION, A BORN SURVIVOR.
A SOLO ACT-- AND CONTENT WITH IT-- TILL SHE MET SCOTT SUMMERS.
DIDN'T MATTER THAT HE WAS MUTANT AND X-MAN, SHE LOVED HIM, WED HIM, BORE HIS SON. THE HAPPINESS LASTED A YEAR.
THEN, WITHOUT WARNING, HE LEFT HOME. NO REAL EXPLANATION, BUT HE WOULDN'T MEET HER EYES. A SECRET, SHE KNEW, SOMETHING BAD.
NO WORD AFTER THAT, NO ANSWER WHEN SHE TRIED TO REACH HIM. IN SAN FRANCISCO, THE MARAUDERS STOLE HER CHILD, LEFT HER FOR DEAD.
SHE WAS IN A COMA FOR MONTHS. WHEN SHE AWOKE, SHE DISCOVERED SHE'D CEASED TO EXIST. SHE KNEW WHO SHE WAS, BUT THERE WAS NO PROOF.
EVERY SCRAP OF DOCUMENTATION ABOUT HER HAD VANISHED. SHE'D BECOME A NON-PERSON.

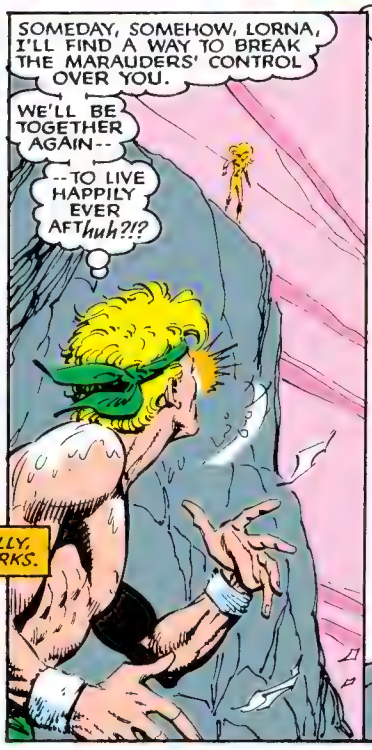
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT.
NOT EVEN MY WEDDING RING.
EVERY POSSESSION-- OBLITERATED AS COMPLETELY AS MY PAST.
I TURNED TO THE POLICE FOR HELP. THEY COULDN'T FIND ANY RECORD THAT MY BABY'D EVEN BEEN BORN. THEY THOUGHT I WAS CRAZY. THE DOCTORS, TOO.
I WAS STARTING TO BELIEVE THEM-- WONDERING IF THE LIFE I REMEMBERED WAS ALL A DREAM, SOME POOR, LONELY PSYCHOTIC'S DESPERATE WISH-FULFILLMENT FANTASY--
--UNTIL THE MARAUDERS CAME AFTER ME AGAIN.*
THE X-MEN SAVED ME. I ALMOST WISH THEY HADN'T.

*X-MEN #'s 221 & 222 --AnnN.

WAS SCOTT LYING WHEN HE SAID HE LOVED ME?! DIDN'T OUR MARRIAGE VOWS MEAN ANYTHING?! WHY HASN'T HE TRIED TO FIND ME, DOESN'T HE CARE?!!
STUPID QUESTION.
HIS ACTIONS ARE HIS ANSWER.


I LOST HIM THE MINUTE HE WALKED OUT MY DOOR.
AND I'VE EVEN LESS HOPE OF FINDING MY SON.
HE COULD BE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD, IF HE'S EVEN ALIVE.
WHAT'S THE POINT OF EVEN LOOKING?

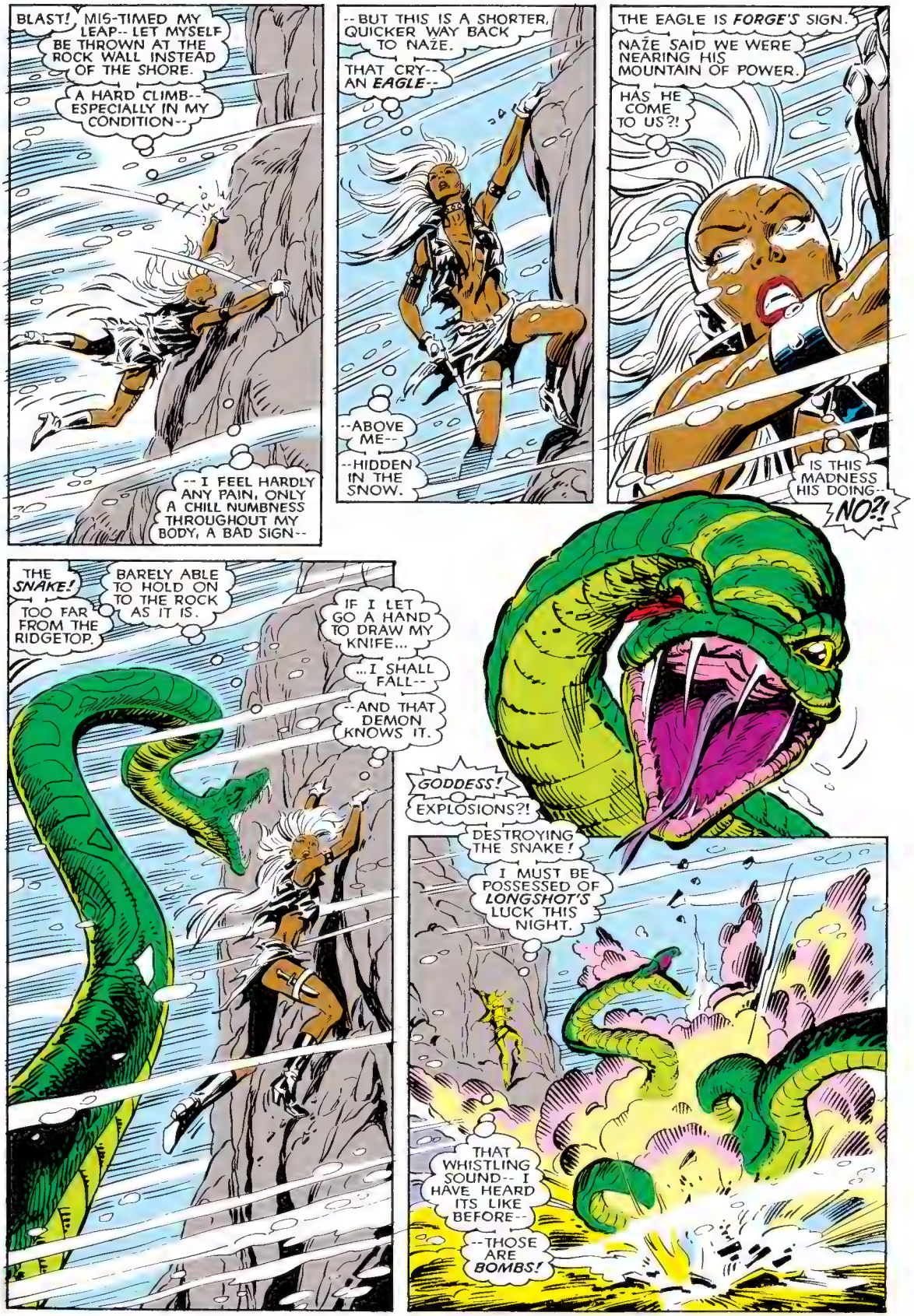

NOT FAR AWAY, ALEX SUMMERS CHALKS UP HIS DAILY MILES. THIS IS HIS WAY OF DEALING WITH PANGS OF THE HEART--
-- WITH PAIN OF THE FLESH.
OCCASIONALLY, IT EVEN WORKS.


SOMEDAY, SOMEHOW, LORNA, I'LL FIND A WAY TO BREAK THE MARAUDERS' CONTROL OVER YOU.
WE'LL BE TOGETHER AGAIN--
--TO LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFT huh?!?

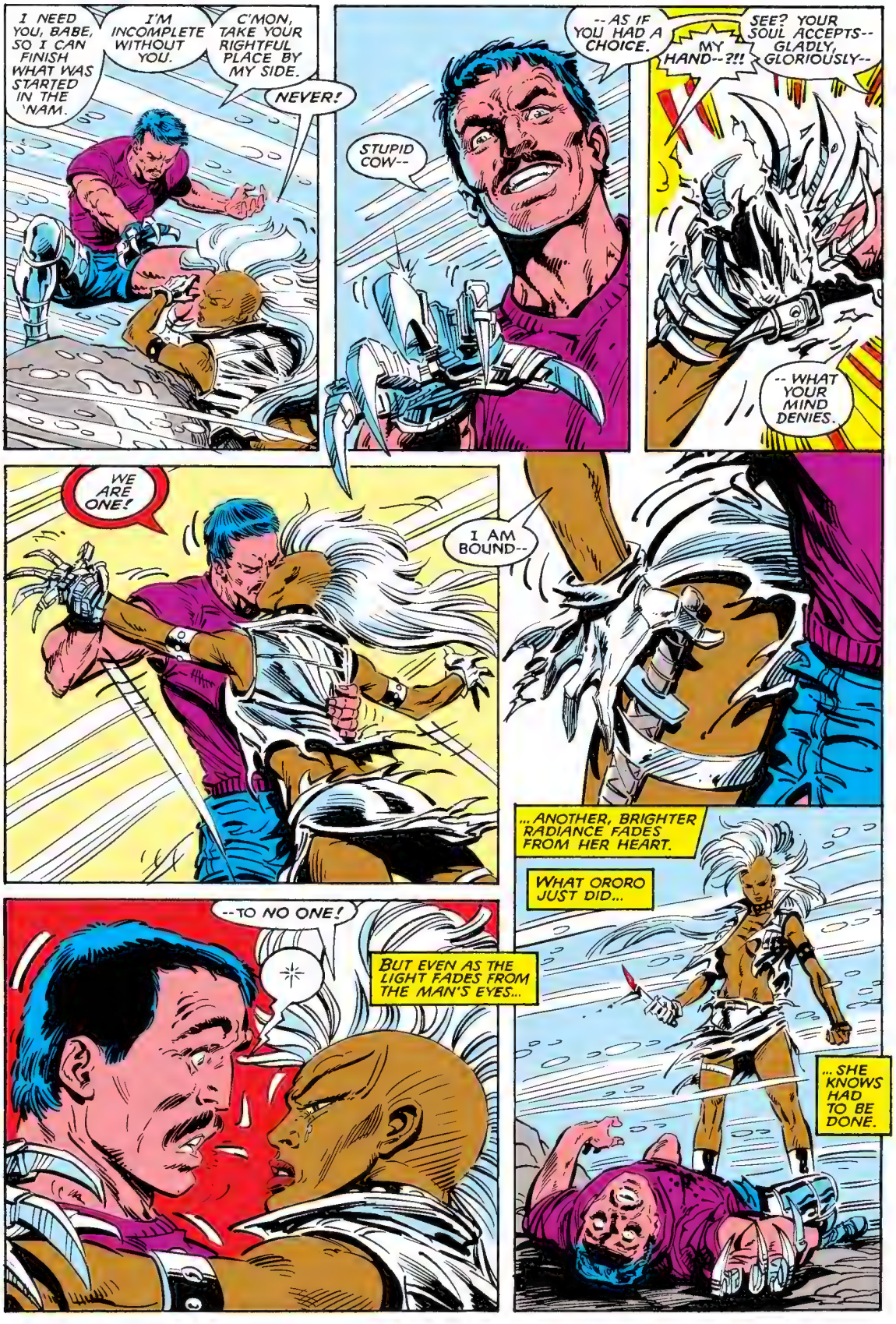
THE ROCKIES.
DRINK.
Umnahh!
NAŻE, THIS IS YOUR RESTORATIVE BREW, CONCOCTED BY ME TO YOUR INSTRUCTIONS AND SPECIFICATIONS--
--AS I LAID OUR FIRE WITH MEDICINAL WOODS AND HERBS YOU HAD ME GATHER.
I MUST SAY, MY FRIEND-- I USUALLY FIND MOST INCENSE CLOYING AND UNPLEASANT, BUT THIS IS QUITE THE OPPOSITE. AKIN TO STANDING IN A HIGH-COUNTRY FOREST MEADOW, BEFORE A CRISP, COOL MORNING BREEZE.
MY HEAD HAS NEVER FELT SO CLEAR, MY THOUGHTS SO KEEN.
I HAVE DONE MY PART, SHAMAN. NOW IT IS YOUR TURN.
I AM NOT ILL.
I'LL DRINK... ...IF YOU WILL.
NOT YET.
THAT BREW PREVENTS SICKNESS AS WELL AS CURES IT-- THE "HUMAN BEINGS'" EQUIVALENT OF CHICKEN SOUP-- TRUST ME-- DO YOU A WORLD O' GOOD.
STORM, YOU WERE SLASHED BY THE EYE-KILLERS, TOO--POISON'S IN YOUR SYSTEM, SAME AS MINE--
--JUST 'CAUSE IT AIN'T MANIFESTED ITSELF UP TILL NOW DON'T MEAN IT WON'T.
WHY TAKE CHANCES?
ALL RIGHT, NAŻE.
I AM CONVINCED.
THAT'S MY GIRL.
QUITE GOOD.
NOW TO REFILL THE LADLE FOR--
BLESSED BRIGHT LADY--!?!
SCHRECK!
ROAR!
CLAWS-- SOMETHING HUGE-- SMASHING THE WALL TO KINDLING--
--WHAT IS OUT THERE?!!

A BEAR!?!
LARGER THAN ANY I'VE EVER SEEN-- AND BERSERK WITH RAGE!
AND IT IS NOT THE ONLY THREAT!
THE WEATHER HAS GONE MAD AS WELL--
--WIND, BITTER COLD--
--BLASTING SNOW INTO MY FACE!
CAREFUL, STORM! CRITTER AIN'T WHAT IT SEEMS!
WHAT IS IT THEN, SHAMAN-- ANOTHER DEMON?!
WHICHEVER, MY KNIFE IS PRECIOUS LITTLE DEFENSE--
AYAIE!
SLASH!
BEAST TOO FAST, BARELY SAW THAT BLOW--
--NEVER BEEN HIT SO HARD--
--CHEST BURNING, HOW DEEPLY WAS I CUT--
--VEST IN TATTERS, oh GODDESS, FLESH MUCH THE SAME--
--WARRIOR WOUNDS, WITH SCARS TO MATCH--
--WOLVERINE WOULD BE PROUD--
--FALLING INTO THE POOL--
--CAREFUL OF THE LEDGE--
Whoulmf!
KRAKSH!
THE WATER--
--FROZEN!
MIRACLE--
--NO BONES BROKEN.
NOT CRIPPLED, MERELY WOUNDED. WHAT LUCK.
HOW CAN THIS BE?! IT IS MID-SUMMER...
...YET THE POND FROZE SOLID IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, AND THE LAND IS BEING SWEPT BY AN ARCTIC BLIZZARD!

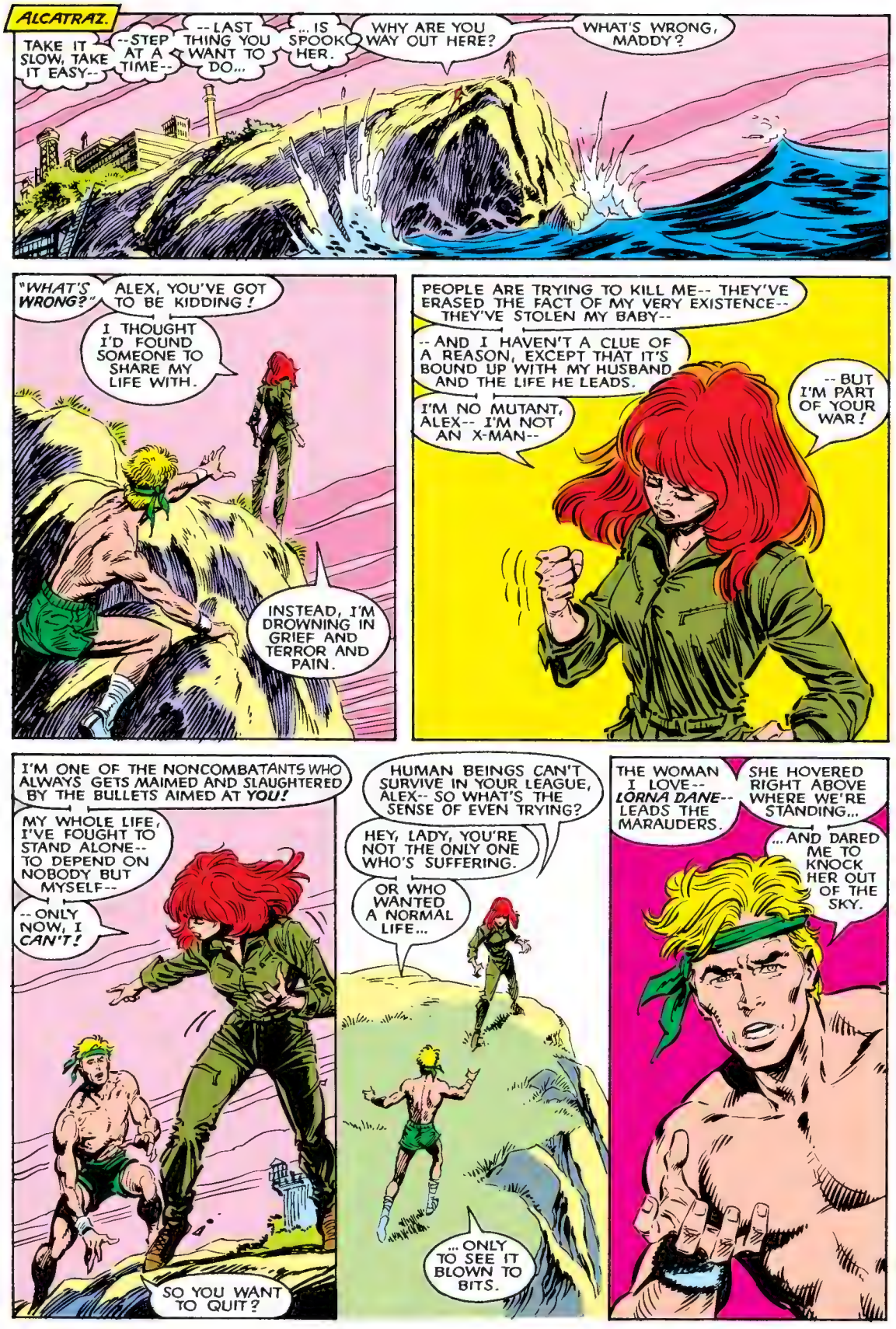
WITH MY ELEMENTAL POWERS, I COULD TRY TO SET THINGS RIGHT.
INSTEAD, I AM AS VULNERABLE-- AND HELPLESS-- AS ANY ORDINARY HUMAN--
--WHAT?!!?
SNAKE--
--GIANT--
--ANOTHER DEMON-FORM--
--CRUSHING ME IN ITS COILS!
NO OPPORTUNITY TO DRAW A DECENT BREATH BEFORE IT DRAGGED ME UNDERWATER.
NO TIME THEREFORE TO WASTE.
CHUNK OF ICE...
...TO JAM ITS MOUTH OPEN.
NOW TO SHOW THE BEAST I, TOO, HAVE FANGS--
-- BEFORE THIS INFERNAL COLD SAPS TOO MUCH OF MY STRENGTH!
AS I SUSPECTED--
--SCALES LIKE ARMOR--
-- ONLY VULNERABLE SPOT...
...APPEARS TO BE...
...ITS EYES!
THAT PROVOKED A REACTION!
HOPEFULLY, IT WILL BE TOO ABSORBED IN ITS OWN PAIN...
...TO WORRY ANYMORE ABOUT ME.

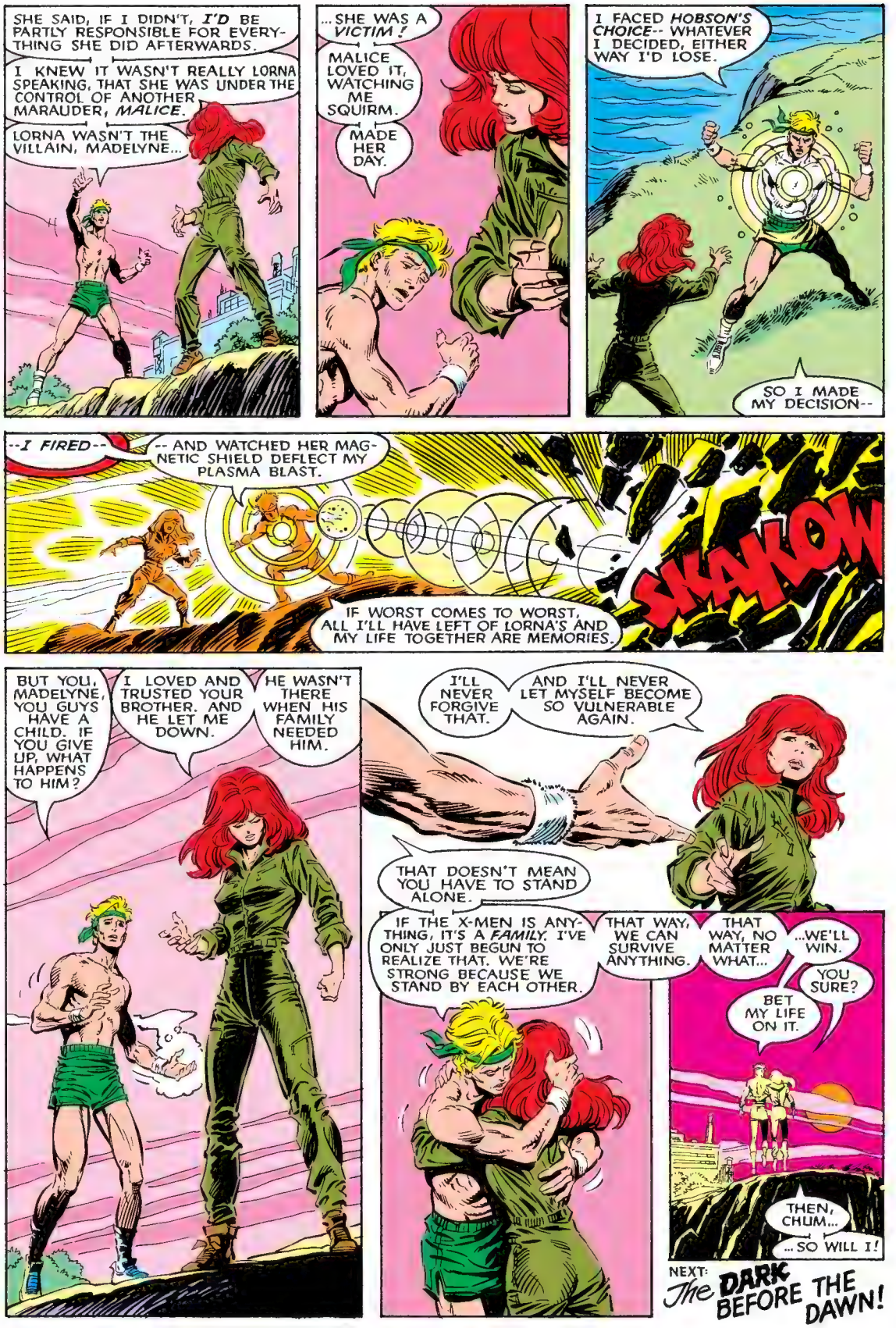

BLAST! MIS-TIMED MY LEAP-- LET MYSELF BE THROWN AT THE ROCK WALL INSTEAD OF THE SHORE.
A HARD CLIMB-- ESPECIALLY IN MY CONDITION--
-- I FEEL HARDLY ANY PAIN, ONLY A CHILL NUMBNESS THROUGHOUT MY BODY, A BAD SIGN--
--BUT THIS IS A SHORTER, QUICKER WAY BACK TO NAZE.
THAT CRY-- AN EAGLE--
--ABOVE ME--
--HIDDEN IN THE SNOW.
THE EAGLE IS FORGE'S SIGN.
NAZE SAID WE WERE NEARING HIS MOUNTAIN OF POWER.
HAS HE COME TO US?!
IS THIS MADNESS HIS DOING--
NO?!
THE SNAKE! TOO FAR FROM THE RIDGETOP.
BARELY ABLE TO HOLD ON TO THE ROCK AS IT IS.
IF I LET GO A HAND TO DRAW MY KNIFE...
...I SHALL FALL--
--AND THAT DEMON KNOWS IT.
GODDESS! EXPLOSIONS?!
DESTROYING THE SNAKE!
I MUST BE POSSESSED OF LONGSHOT'S LUCK THIS NIGHT.
THAT WHISTLING SOUND-- I HAVE HEARD ITS LIKE BEFORE--
--THOSE ARE BOMBS!

THIS MOUNTAIN FOREST-- HAS BECOME TROPICAL JUNGLE-- A WARZONE-- VIETNAM!
I FEEL ITS STEAMING HEAT-- YET THE BLIZZARD STILL RAGES!
SOMEHOW, THE TWO REALITIES OVERLAP!
THOSE DEMONS-- I SAW THEM MONTHS AGO, AS PART OF A HOLOGRAPHIC DISPLAY IN FORGE'S PENTHOUSE!*
I WONDERED THEN IF THEY WERE FANTASY-- OR SOME NIGHT-MARE FROM FORGE'S PAST?
NOW, I KNOW.
HE MUST HAVE CONJURED THE CREATURES TO SLAUGHTER HIS ENEMIES.
*IN X-MEN #186... AND AGAIN IN #220-- AnnN.
IT WAS A WAR--EVIDENTLY, SOME DESPERATE BATTLE-- PERHAPS HE BELIEVED HE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE.
BUT-- HOWEVER NOBLE HIS MOTIVES-- THEY ARE FOREVER TAINTED BY THE FOUL MEANS HE USED.
AS, I FEAR, IS THE MAN'S SOUL.
THERE HE IS-- --FORGE!
IN THE GODDESS'S NAME--
--WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
ENJOYING MYSELF, SWEETHEART.
IS THAT A CRIME?
WHAT'S THE POINT OF HAVING POWER... ...IF IT'S NEVER USED?
I'M THE "MAKER," REMEMBER?
BUT INSTEAD OF BUILDING TOYS--
--LIKE MY PROSTHETIC HAND--
--I PLAN TO RESHAPE CREATION!
WANNA HELP?


I NEED YOU, BABE, SO I CAN FINISH WHAT WAS STARTED IN THE 'NAM.
I'M INCOMPLETE WITHOUT YOU.
C'MON, TAKE YOUR RIGHTFUL PLACE BY MY SIDE.
NEVER!
STUPID COW--
-- AS IF YOU HAD A CHOICE.
MY HAND--?!!
SEE? YOUR SOUL ACCEPTS-- GLADLY, GLORIOUSLY--
-- WHAT YOUR MIND DENIES.
WE ARE ONE!
I AM BOUND--
--TO NO ONE!
BUT EVEN AS THE LIGHT FADES FROM THE MAN'S EYES...
...ANOTHER, BRIGHTER RADIANCE FADES FROM HER HEART.
WHAT ORORO JUST DID...
...SHE KNOWS HAD TO BE DONE.

BUT AT THE MOST TERRIBLE OF COSTS.
THE LINE SHACK--
--MY CLOTHES--
--MY BODY--
-- UNDAMAGED, UNTOUCHED, UNHURT!
THE TRIAL IS ENDED, WIND-RIDER.
BREATHE EASILY. YOU ARE SAFE.
NOTHING HAPPENED. IT WAS ONLY A DREAM.
HARDLY. YOU FORGET, CHILD, DREAMS ARE BUT REALITY CAST IN A DIFFERENT FORM.
WHAT YOU ENDURED HAD A SUBSTANCE-- AND MEANING-- ALL ITS OWN.
I NEVER IMAGINED FORGE CAPABLE OF SUCH TERROR.
NAŹE, HE THREW WIDE THE GATE OF CHAOS AND LAUGHED TO BEHOLD OUR WORLD CONSUMED.
HE REMAINED THE "MAKER"--
--ONLY THIS TIME, OF TRANSCENDENT EVIL.
WAS AFRAID OF THAT.
HURTS BAD, DON'T IT?
YOU HAVE NO IDEA. WORDS SOUND SO SMALL AND HOLLOW...
...THEY CANNOT BEGIN TO ENCOMPASS THE EMOTIONS THEY REPRESENT.
I LOVE FORGE, NAŹE...
...BUT BECAUSE OF WHAT HE IS DOING...
...WHAT HE HAS BECOME...
...I MUST-- I SHALL--
--DESTROY HIM.
SHE DOESN'T SEE THE SMILE, NOR THE FLASH OF TRIUMPH IN THE OLD MAN'S HOODED EYES...
...NOR IS SHE AWARE OF THE SNOWFALL BEGINNING OUTSIDE...
...AS REALITY BEGINS TO TAKE ON THE WARPED, MADCAP ASPECTS OF HER DREAM...
...AND THE LAUGHTER OF CHAOS ECHOES SOFTLY ACROSS THE LAND.


ALCATRAZ.
TAKE IT SLOW, TAKE IT EASY--
--STEP AT A TIME--
--LAST THING YOU WANT TO DO...
...IS SPOOK HER.
WHY ARE YOU WAY OUT HERE?
WHAT'S WRONG, MADDY?
"WHAT'S WRONG?"
ALEX, YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!
I THOUGHT I'D FOUND SOMEONE TO SHARE MY LIFE WITH.
INSTEAD, I'M DROWNING IN GRIEF AND TERROR AND PAIN.
PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO KILL ME-- THEY'VE ERASED THE FACT OF MY VERY EXISTENCE-- THEY'VE STOLEN MY BABY--
-- AND I HAVEN'T A CLUE OF A REASON, EXCEPT THAT IT'S BOUND UP WITH MY HUSBAND AND THE LIFE HE LEADS.
I'M NO MUTANT, ALEX-- I'M NOT AN X-MAN--
-- BUT I'M PART OF YOUR WAR!
I'M ONE OF THE NONCOMBATANTS WHO ALWAYS GETS MAIMED AND SLAUGHTERED BY THE BULLETS AIMED AT YOU!
MY WHOLE LIFE, I'VE FOUGHT TO STAND ALONE-- TO DEPEND ON NOBODY BUT MYSELF--
-- ONLY NOW, I CAN'T!
SO YOU WANT TO QUIT?
HUMAN BEINGS CAN'T SURVIVE IN YOUR LEAGUE, ALEX-- SO WHAT'S THE SENSE OF EVEN TRYING?
HEY, LADY, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO'S SUFFERING.
OR WHO WANTED A NORMAL LIFE...
... ONLY TO SEE IT BLOWN TO BITS.
THE WOMAN I LOVE-- LORNA DANE-- LEADS THE MARAUDERS.
SHE HOVERED RIGHT ABOVE WHERE WE'RE STANDING...
... AND DARED ME TO KNOCK HER OUT OF THE SKY.


SHE SAID, IF I DIDN'T, I'D BE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING SHE DID AFTERWARDS.
I KNEW IT WASN'T REALLY LORNA SPEAKING, THAT SHE WAS UNDER THE CONTROL OF ANOTHER MARAUDER, MALICE.
LORNA WASN'T THE VILLAIN, MADELYNE...
...SHE WAS A VICTIM!
MALICE LOVED IT, WATCHING ME SQUIRM.
MADE HER DAY.
I FACED HOBSON'S CHOICE-- WHATEVER I DECIDED, EITHER WAY I'D LOSE.
SO I MADE MY DECISION--
--I FIRED--
-- AND WATCHED HER MAGNETIC SHIELD DEFLECT MY PLASMA BLAST.
SKAKOW
IF WORST COMES TO WORST, ALL I'LL HAVE LEFT OF LORNA'S AND MY LIFE TOGETHER ARE MEMORIES.
BUT YOU, MADELYNE, YOU GUYS HAVE A CHILD. IF YOU GIVE UP, WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM?
I LOVED AND TRUSTED YOUR BROTHER. AND HE LET ME DOWN.
HE WASN'T THERE WHEN HIS FAMILY NEEDED HIM.
I'LL NEVER FORGIVE THAT.
AND I'LL NEVER LET MYSELF BECOME SO VULNERABLE AGAIN.
THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO STAND ALONE.
IF THE X-MEN IS ANYTHING, IT'S A FAMILY. I'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN TO REALIZE THAT. WE'RE STRONG BECAUSE WE STAND BY EACH OTHER.
THAT WAY, WE CAN SURVIVE ANYTHING.
THAT WAY, NO MATTER WHAT...
...WE'LL WIN.
YOU SURE?
BET MY LIFE ON IT.
THEN, CHUM...
...SO WILL I!
NEXT: The DARK BEFORE THE DAWN!

MARVEL
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
TM
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224
DEC
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE
AUTHORITY
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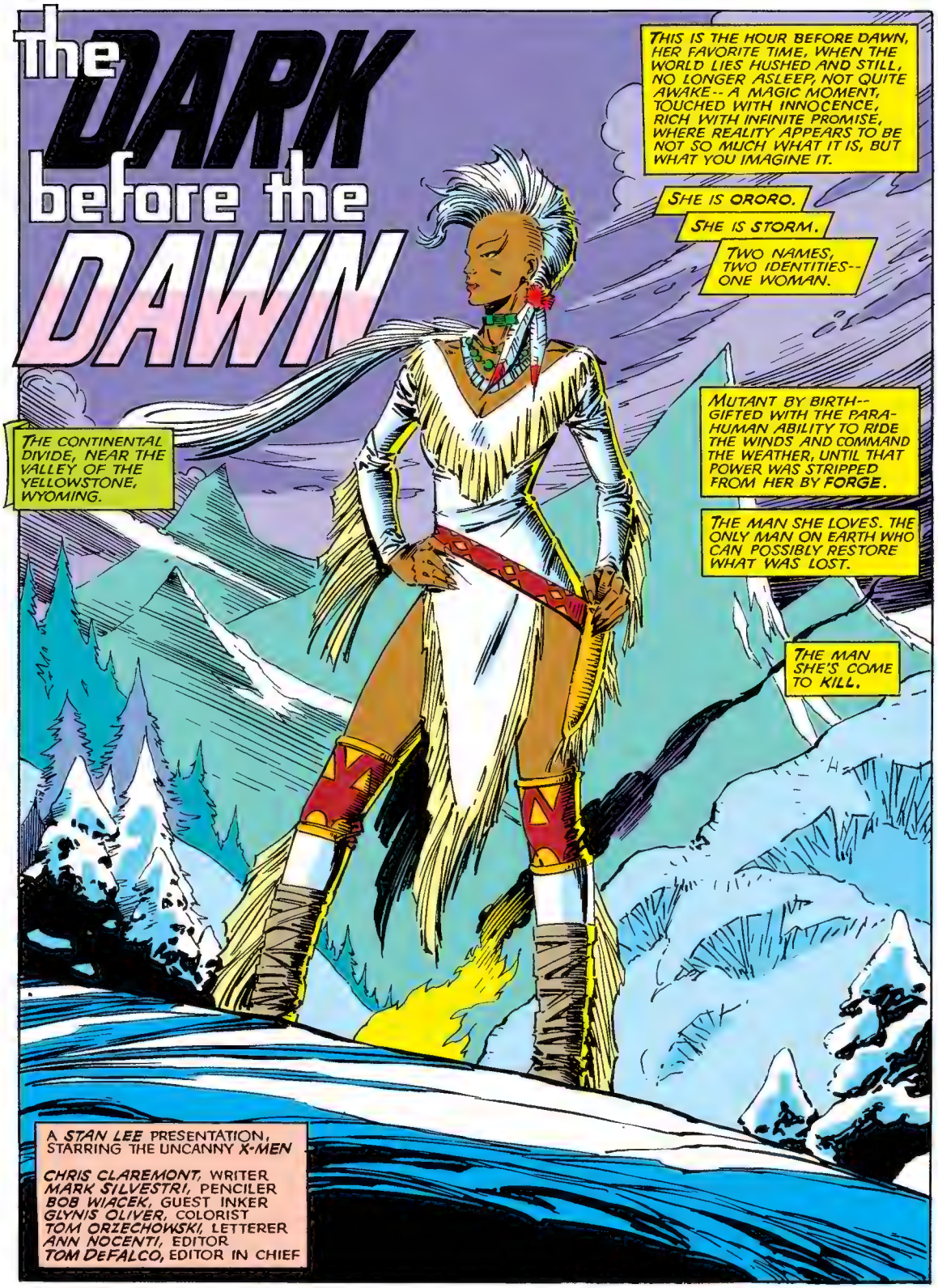
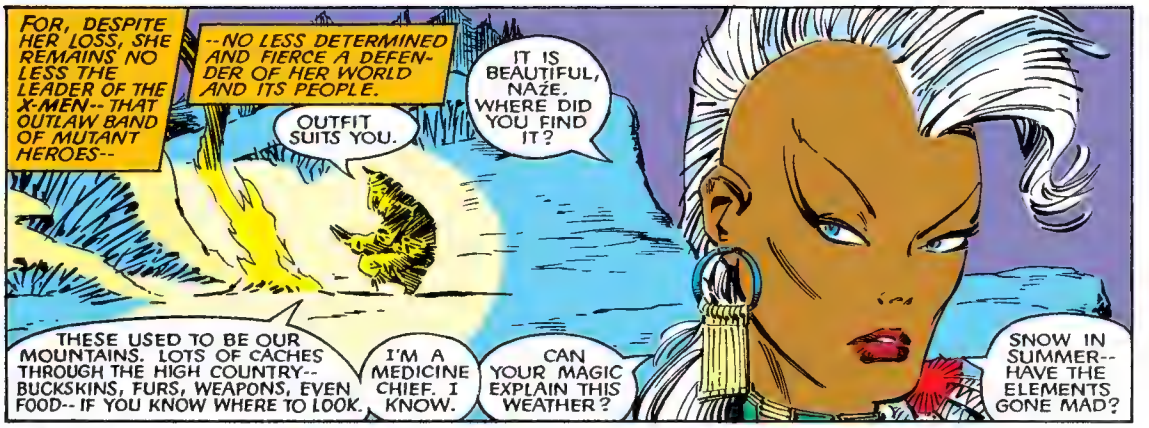
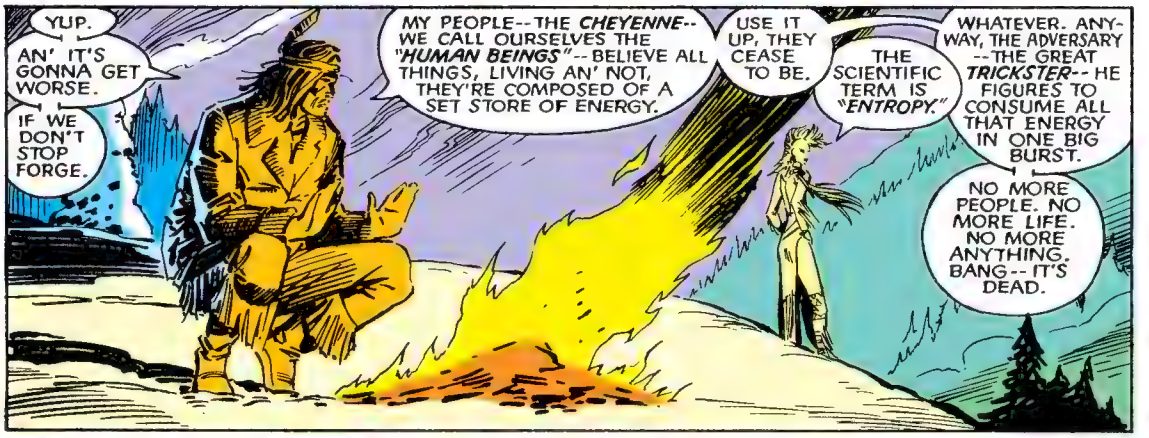
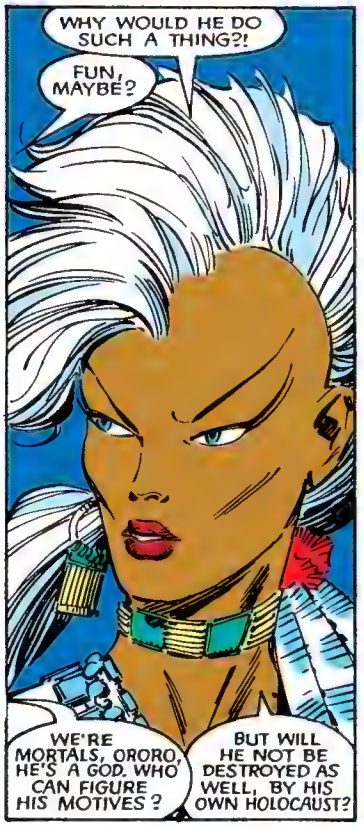

the DARK before the DAWN
THIS IS THE HOUR BEFORE DAWN, HER FAVORITE TIME, WHEN THE WORLD LIES HUSHED AND STILL, NO LONGER ASLEEP, NOT QUITE AWAKE-- A MAGIC MOMENT, TOUCHED WITH INNOCENCE, RICH WITH INFINITE PROMISE, WHERE REALITY APPEARS TO BE NOT SO MUCH WHAT IT IS, BUT WHAT YOU IMAGINE IT.
SHE IS ORORO.
SHE IS STORM.
TWO NAMES, TWO IDENTITIES-- ONE WOMAN.
MUTANT BY BIRTH-- GIFTED WITH THE PARA-HUMAN ABILITY TO RIDE THE WINDS AND COMMAND THE WEATHER, UNTIL THAT POWER WAS STRIPPED FROM HER BY FORGE.
THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, NEAR THE VALLEY OF THE YELLOWSTONE, WYOMING.
THE MAN SHE LOVES. THE ONLY MAN ON EARTH WHO CAN POSSIBLY RESTORE WHAT WAS LOST.
THE MAN SHE'S COME TO KILL.
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION, STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER
MARK SILVESTRI, PENCILER
BOB WIACEK, GUEST INKER
GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER
ANN NOCENTI, EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO, EDITOR IN CHIEF

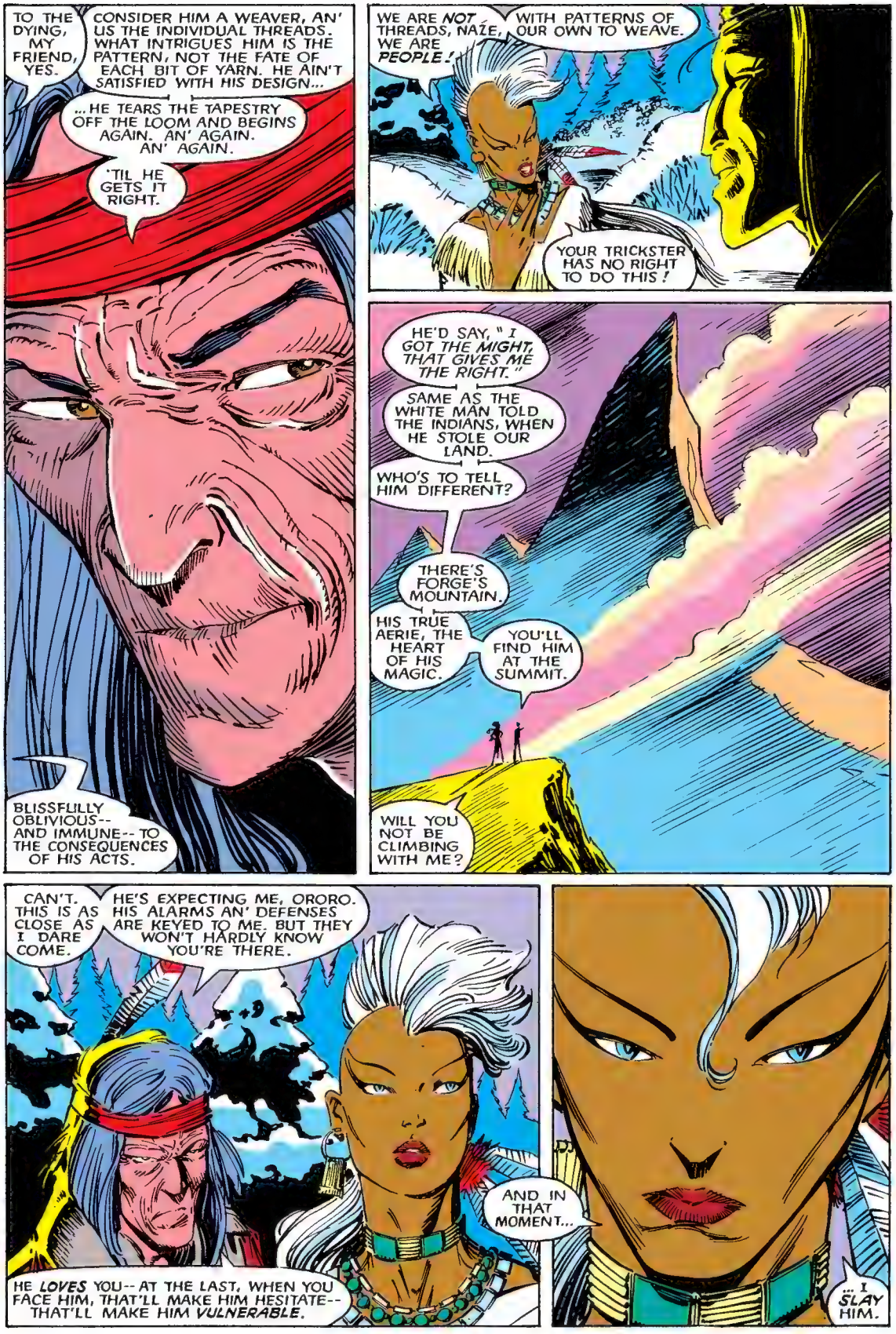

FOR, DESPITE HER LOSS, SHE REMAINS NO LESS THE LEADER OF THE X-MEN-- THAT OUTLAW BAND OF MUTANT HEROES--
--NO LESS DETERMINED AND FIERCE A DEFENDER OF HER WORLD AND ITS PEOPLE.
OUTFIT SUITS YOU.
IT IS BEAUTIFUL, NAŻE. WHERE DID YOU FIND IT?
THESE USED TO BE OUR MOUNTAINS. LOTS OF CACHES THROUGH THE HIGH COUNTRY-- BUCKSKINS, FURS, WEAPONS, EVEN FOOD-- IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.
I'M A MEDICINE CHIEF. I KNOW.
CAN YOUR MAGIC EXPLAIN THIS WEATHER?
SNOW IN SUMMER-- HAVE THE ELEMENTS GONE MAD?

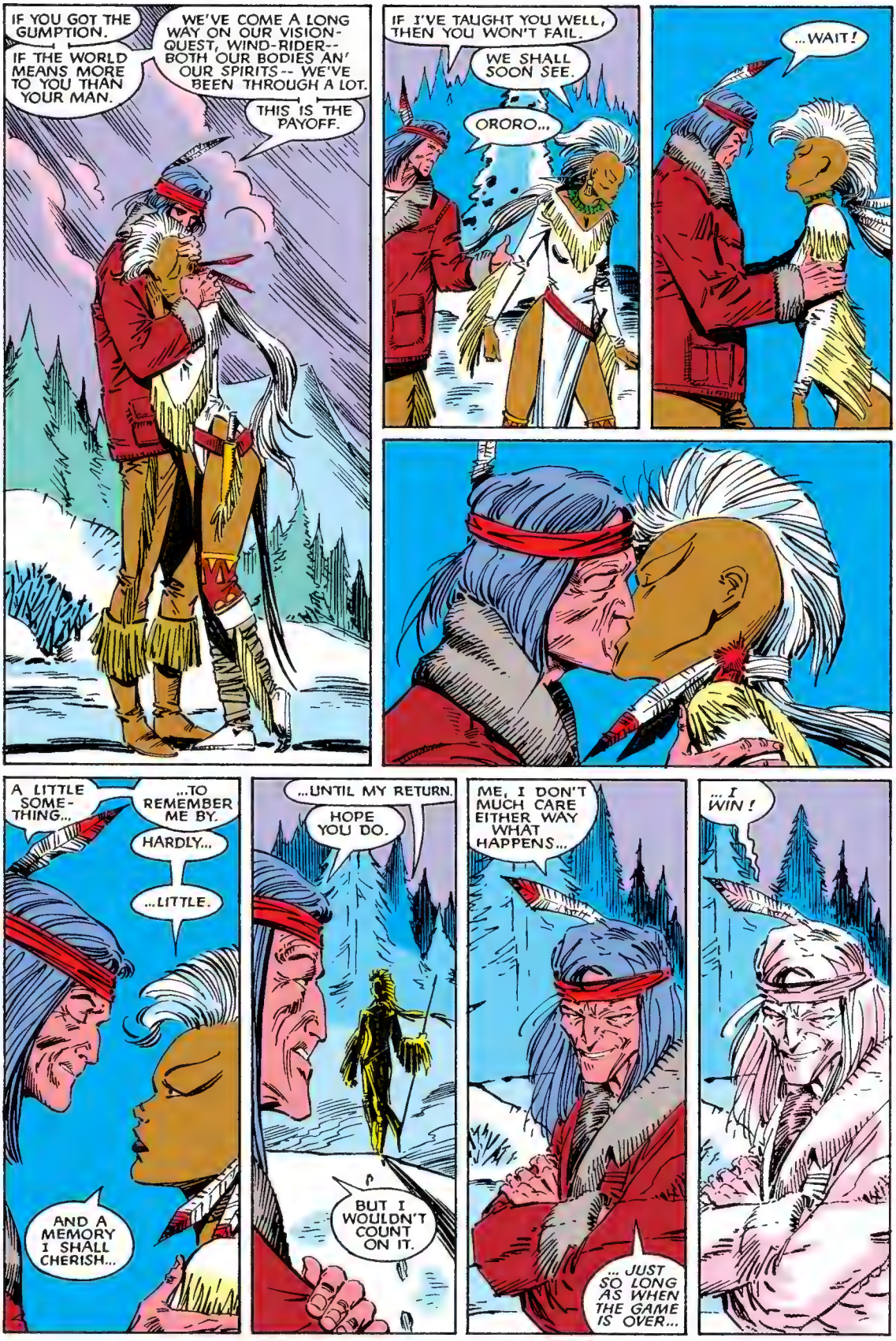

YUP.
AN' IT'S GONNA GET WORSE.
IF WE DON'T STOP FORGE.
MY PEOPLE--THE CHEYENNE-- WE CALL OURSELVES THE "HUMAN BEINGS"-- BELIEVE ALL THINGS, LIVING AN' NOT, THEY'RE COMPOSED OF A SET STORE OF ENERGY.
USE IT UP, THEY CEASE TO BE.
THE SCIENTIFIC TERM IS "ENTROPY."
WHATEVER. ANYWAY, THE ADVERSARY --THE GREAT TRICKSTER-- HE FIGURES TO CONSUME ALL THAT ENERGY IN ONE BIG BURST.
NO MORE PEOPLE. NO MORE LIFE. NO MORE ANYTHING. BANG-- IT'S DEAD.

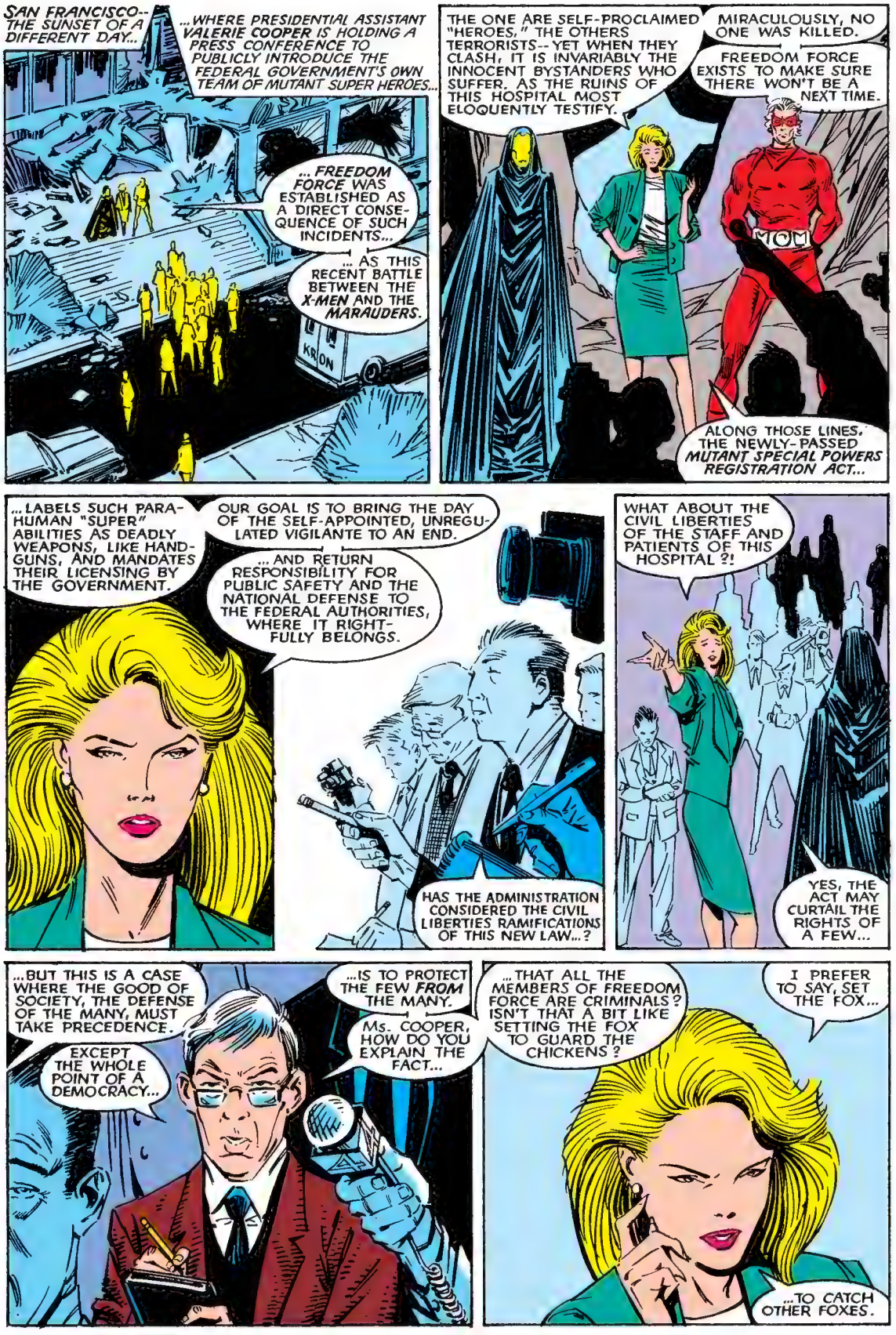

WHY WOULD HE DO SUCH A THING?!
FUN, MAYBE?
WE'RE MORTALS, ORORO, HE'S A GOD. WHO CAN FIGURE HIS MOTIVES?
BUT WILL HE NOT BE DESTROYED AS WELL, BY HIS OWN HOLOCAUST?

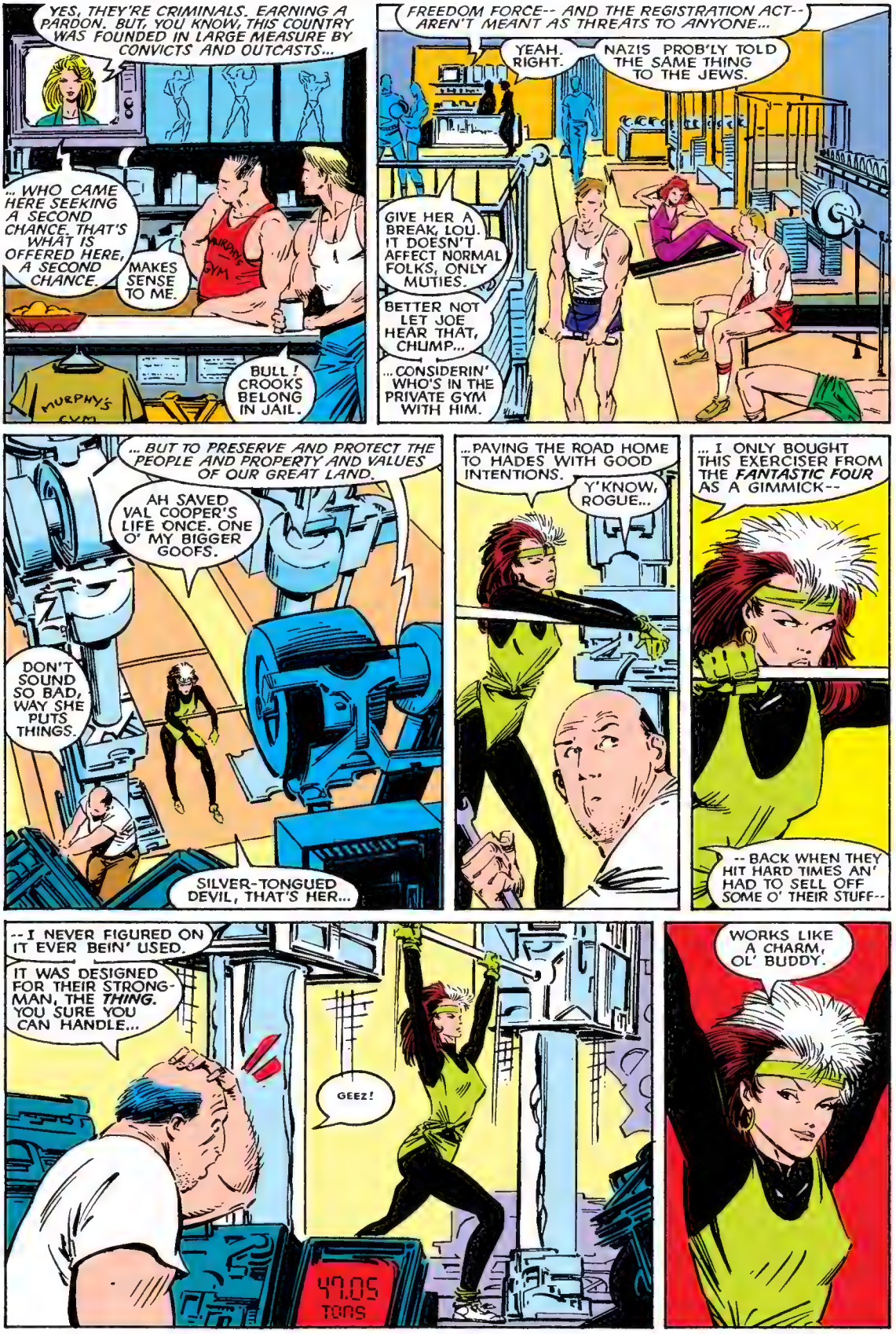
NOPE. HE SURVIVES-- ALWAYS HAS, ALWAYS WILL-- TO CAST THE WORLD ANEW, AN' START THE CYCLE OVER AGAIN.
HE'S BEYOND LIFE AN' DEATH, LAUGHIN' AN' DANCIN' HIS WAY THROUGH ETERNITY.
YOU SPEAK OF HIM WITH ADMIRATION.
I APPRECIATE BRASS AN' STYLE.
HE HAS BOTH. SO DO YOU.

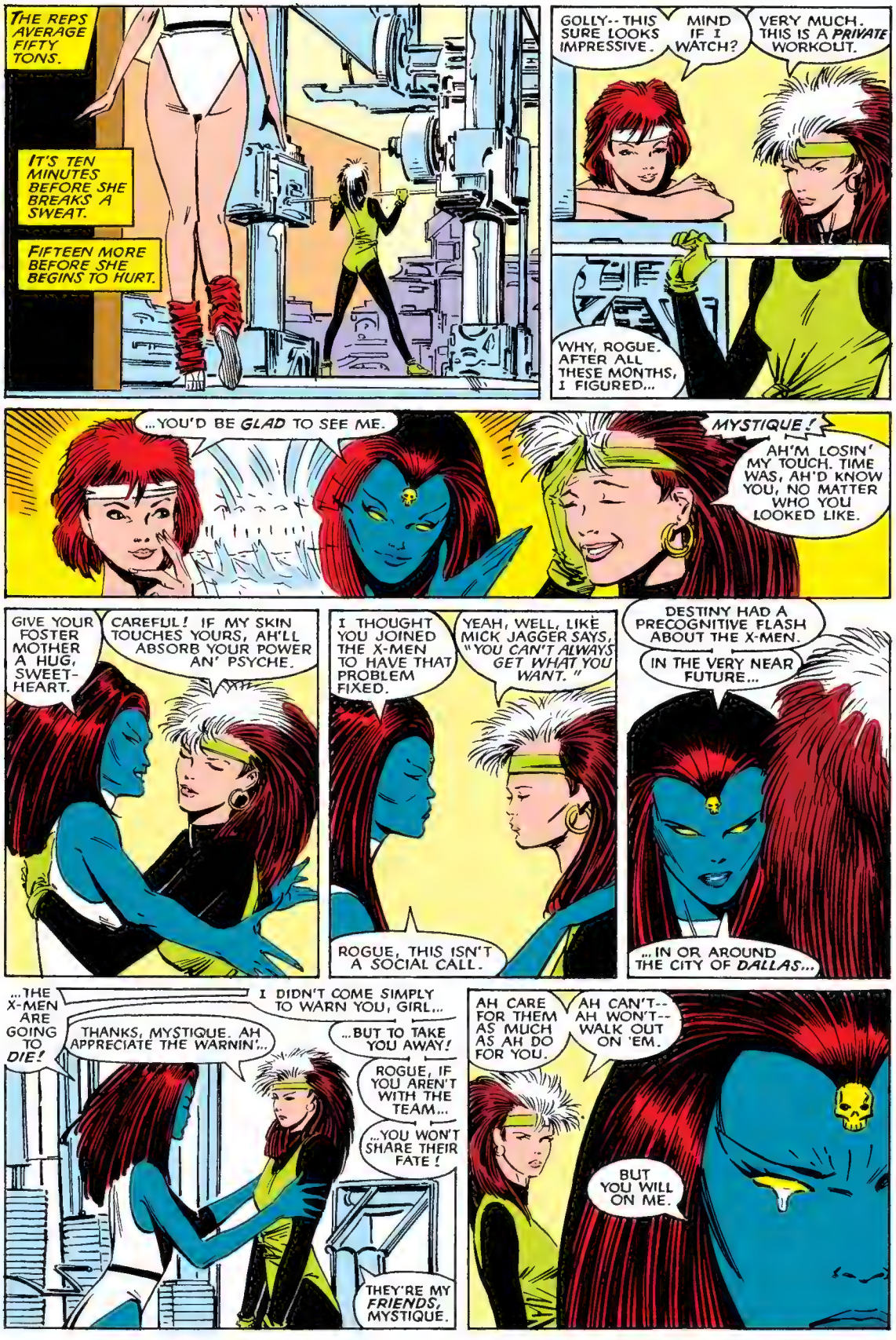
AND WHAT OF THOSE WHO WILL SUFFER-- AND PERISH--BECAUSE OF THIS... WHIM?
ALL THINGS DIE, ORORO.
IN THE GREATER SCHEME OF THINGS, DOES IT REALLY MATTER WHEN?

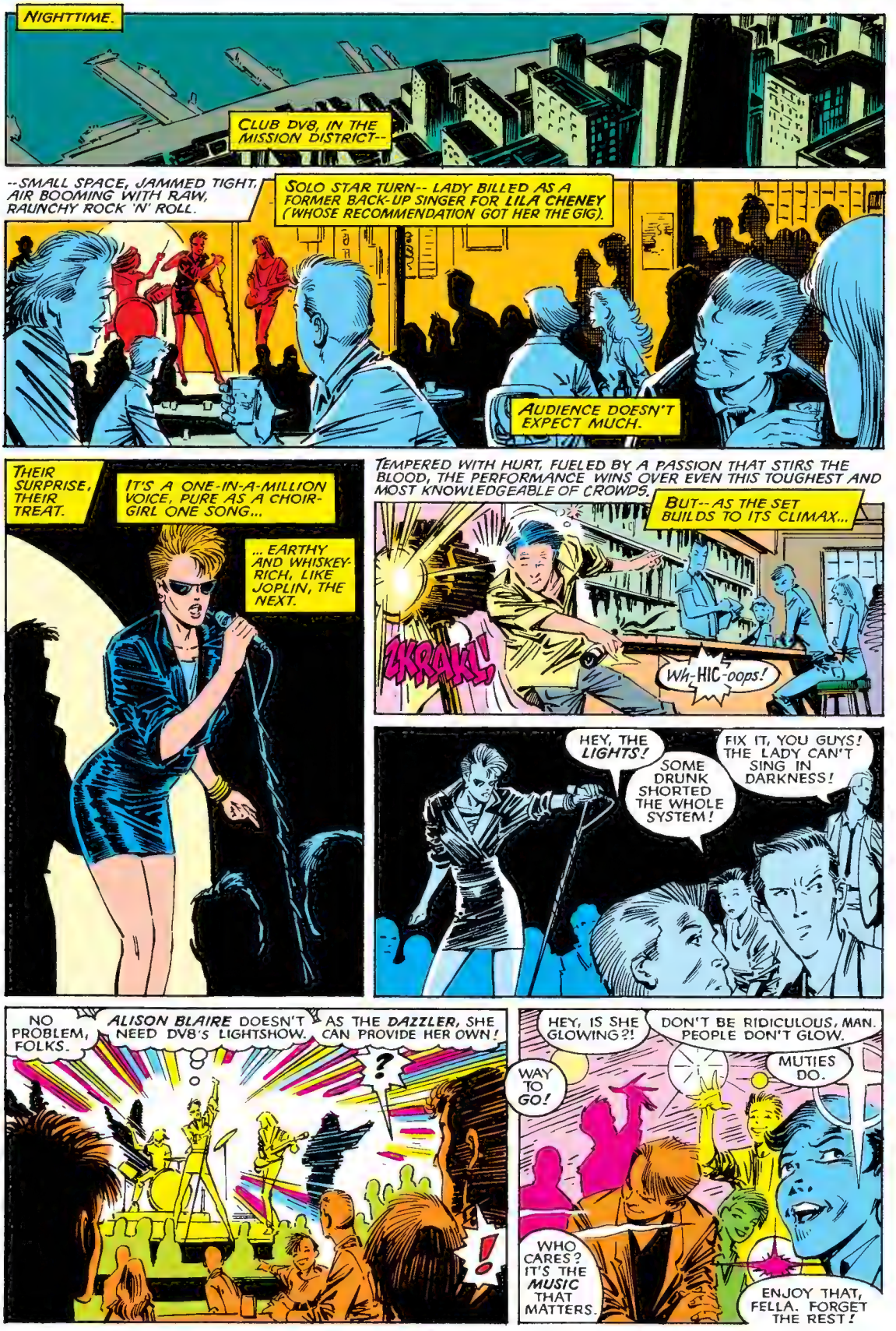

TO THE DYING, MY FRIEND, YES.
CONSIDER HIM A WEAVER, AN' US THE INDIVIDUAL THREADS. WHAT INTRIGUES HIM IS THE PATTERN, NOT THE FATE OF EACH BIT OF YARN. HE AIN'T SATISFIED WITH HIS DESIGN...
...HE TEARS THE TAPESTRY OFF THE LOOM AND BEGINS AGAIN. AN' AGAIN. AN' AGAIN.
'TIL HE GETS IT RIGHT.
BLISSFULLY OBLIVIOUS-- AND IMMUNE-- TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS ACTS.
WE ARE NOT THREADS, NAŽE, WE ARE PEOPLE!
WITH PATTERNS OF OUR OWN TO WEAVE.
YOUR TRICKSTER HAS NO RIGHT TO DO THIS!
HE'D SAY, "I GOT THE MIGHT, THAT GIVES ME THE RIGHT."
SAME AS THE WHITE MAN TOLD THE INDIANS, WHEN HE STOLE OUR LAND.
WHO'S TO TELL HIM DIFFERENT?
THERE'S FORGE'S MOUNTAIN.
HIS TRUE AERIE, THE HEART OF HIS MAGIC.
YOU'LL FIND HIM AT THE SUMMIT.
WILL YOU NOT BE CLIMBING WITH ME?
CAN'T. THIS IS AS CLOSE AS I DARE COME.
HE'S EXPECTING ME, ORORO. HIS ALARMS AN' DEFENSES ARE KEYED TO ME. BUT THEY WON'T HARDLY KNOW YOU'RE THERE.
HE LOVES YOU-- AT THE LAST, WHEN YOU FACE HIM, THAT'LL MAKE HIM HESITATE-- THAT'LL MAKE HIM VULNERABLE.
AND IN THAT MOMENT...
... I SLAY HIM.

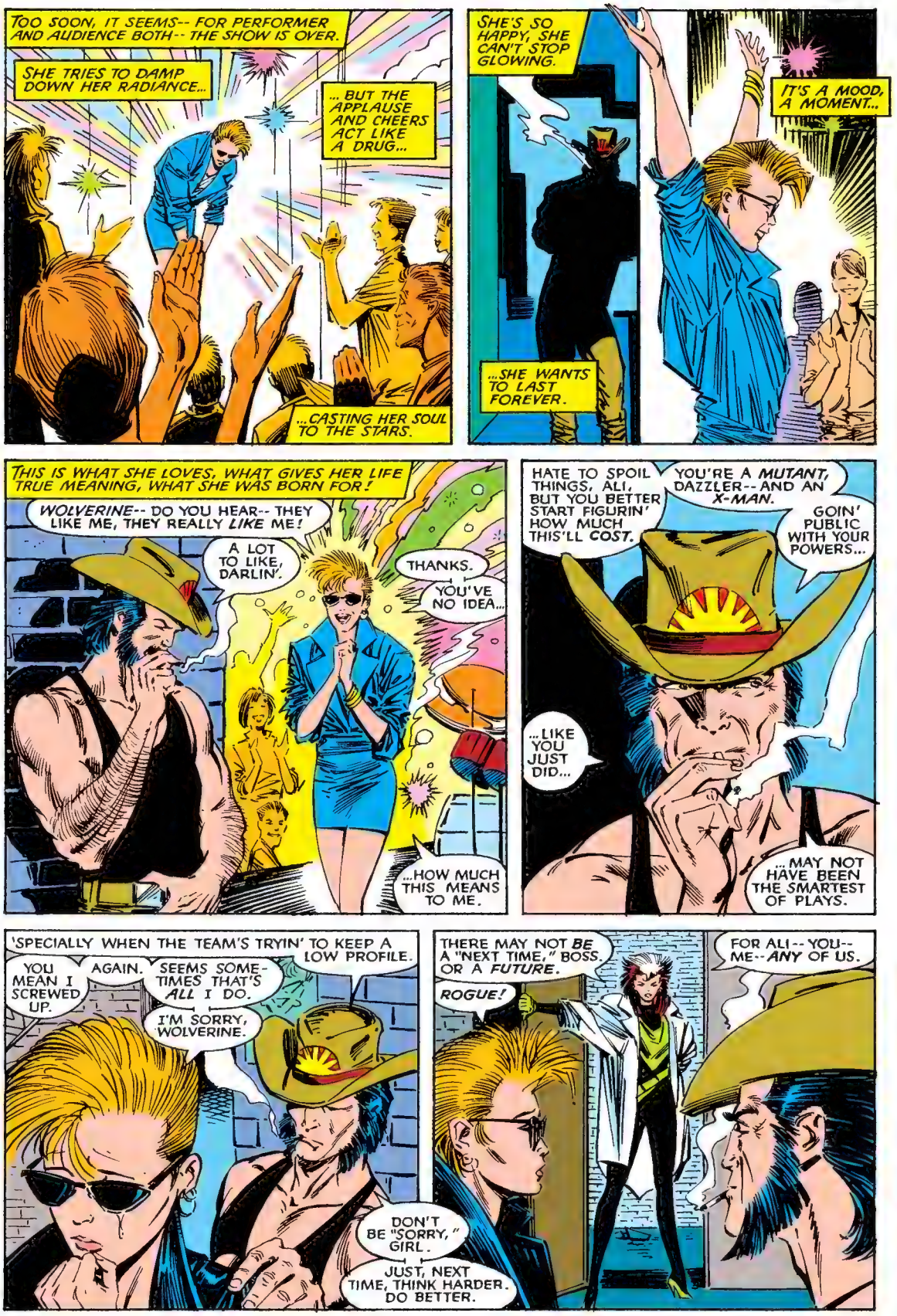

IF YOU GOT THE GUMPTION.
IF THE WORLD MEANS MORE TO YOU THAN YOUR MAN.
WE'VE COME A LONG WAY ON OUR VISION-QUEST, WIND-RIDER-- BOTH OUR BODIES AN' OUR SPIRITS -- WE'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT.
THIS IS THE PAYOFF.
IF I'VE TAUGHT YOU WELL, THEN YOU WON'T FAIL.
WE SHALL SOON SEE.
ORORO...
...WAIT!
A LITTLE SOME-THING...
...TO REMEMBER ME BY.
HARDLY...
...LITTLE.
AND A MEMORY I SHALL CHERISH...
...UNTIL MY RETURN.
HOPE YOU DO.
BUT I WOULDN'T COUNT ON IT.
ME, I DON'T MUCH CARE EITHER WAY WHAT HAPPENS...
... JUST SO LONG AS WHEN THE GAME IS OVER...
... I WIN!

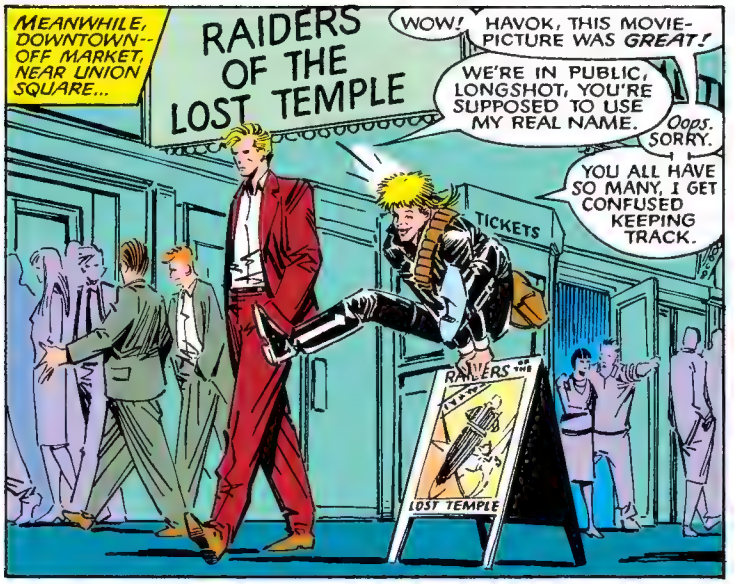

SAN FRANCISCO--THE SUNSET OF A DIFFERENT DAY..
...WHERE PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT VALERIE COOPER IS HOLDING A PRESS CONFERENCE TO PUBLICLY INTRODUCE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S OWN TEAM OF MUTANT SUPER HEROES...
...FREEDOM FORCE WAS ESTABLISHED AS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE OF SUCH INCIDENTS...
...AS THIS RECENT BATTLE BETWEEN THE X-MEN AND THE MARAUDERS.
KRION
THE ONE ARE SELF-PROCLAIMED "HEROES," THE OTHERS TERRORISTS--YET WHEN THEY CLASH, IT IS INVARIABLY THE INNOCENT BYSTANDERS WHO SUFFER. AS THE RUINS OF THIS HOSPITAL MOST ELOQUENTLY TESTIFY.
MIRACULOUSLY, NO ONE WAS KILLED.
FREEDOM FORCE EXISTS TO MAKE SURE THERE WON'T BE A NEXT TIME.
MOM
ALONG THOSE LINES, THE NEWLY-PASSED MUTANT SPECIAL POWERS REGISTRATION ACT...
...LABELS SUCH PARA-HUMAN "SUPER" ABILITIES AS DEADLY WEAPONS, LIKE HAND-GUNS, AND MANDATES THEIR LICENSING BY THE GOVERNMENT.
OUR GOAL IS TO BRING THE DAY OF THE SELF-APPOINTED, UNREGULATED VIGILANTE TO AN END.
...AND RETURN RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE NATIONAL DEFENSE TO THE FEDERAL AUTHORITIES, WHERE IT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS.
HAS THE ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERED THE CIVIL LIBERTIES RAMIFICATIONS OF THIS NEW LAW...?
WHAT ABOUT THE CIVIL LIBERTIES OF THE STAFF AND PATIENTS OF THIS HOSPITAL?!
YES, THE ACT MAY CURTAIL THE RIGHTS OF A FEW...
...BUT THIS IS A CASE WHERE THE GOOD OF SOCIETY, THE DEFENSE OF THE MANY, MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE.
EXCEPT THE WHOLE POINT OF A DEMOCRACY...
...IS TO PROTECT THE FEW FROM THE MANY.
MS. COOPER, HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE FACT...
...THAT ALL THE MEMBERS OF FREEDOM FORCE ARE CRIMINALS? ISN'T THAT A BIT LIKE SETTING THE FOX TO GUARD THE CHICKENS?
I PREFER TO SAY, SET THE FOX...
...TO CATCH OTHER FOXES.

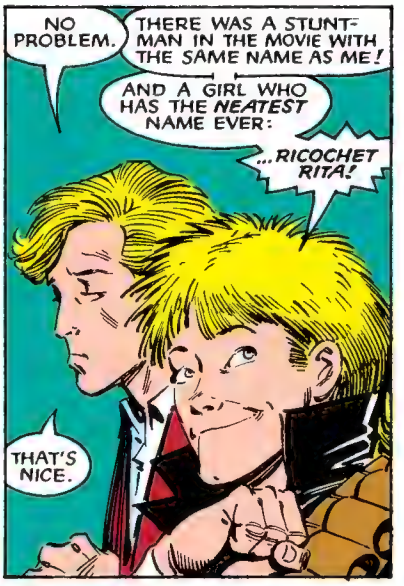

YES, THEY'RE CRIMINALS. EARNING A PARDON. BUT, YOU KNOW, THIS COUNTRY WAS FOUNDED IN LARGE MEASURE BY CONVICTS AND OUTCASTS...
... WHO CAME HERE SEEKING A SECOND CHANCE. THAT'S WHAT IS OFFERED HERE, A SECOND CHANCE.
MAKES SENSE TO ME.
BULL! CROOKS BELONG IN JAIL.
MURPHY'S GYM
FREEDOM FORCE-- AND THE REGISTRATION ACT-- AREN'T MEANT AS THREATS TO ANYONE...
YEAH. RIGHT.
NAZIS PROB'LY TOLD THE SAME THING TO THE JEWS.
GIVE HER A BREAK, LOU. IT DOESN'T AFFECT NORMAL FOLKS, ONLY MUTIES.
BETTER NOT LET JOE HEAR THAT, CHUMP...
...CONSIDERIN' WHO'S IN THE PRIVATE GYM WITH HIM.
... BUT TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE PEOPLE AND PROPERTY AND VALUES OF OUR GREAT LAND.
AH SAVED VAL COOPER'S LIFE ONCE. ONE O' MY BIGGER GOOFS.
DON'T SOUND SO BAD, WAY SHE PUTS THINGS.
SILVER-TONGUED DEVIL, THAT'S HER...
...PAVING THE ROAD HOME TO HADES WITH GOOD INTENTIONS.
Y'KNOW, ROGUE...
... I ONLY BOUGHT THIS EXERCISER FROM THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* AS A GIMMICK--
-- BACK WHEN THEY HIT HARD TIMES AN' HAD TO SELL OFF SOME O' THEIR STUFF--
-- I NEVER FIGURED ON IT EVER BEIN' USED.
IT WAS DESIGNED FOR THEIR STRONG-MAN, THE *THING*. YOU SURE YOU CAN HANDLE...
GEEZ!
49.05 TONS
WORKS LIKE A CHARM, OL' BUDDY.


THE REPS AVERAGE FIFTY TONS.
IT'S TEN MINUTES BEFORE SHE BREAKS A SWEAT.
FIFTEEN MORE BEFORE SHE BEGINS TO HURT.
GOLLY-- THIS SURE LOOKS IMPRESSIVE.
MIND IF I WATCH?
VERY MUCH. THIS IS A PRIVATE WORKOUT.
WHY, ROGUE. AFTER ALL THESE MONTHS, I FIGURED...
...YOU'D BE GLAD TO SEE ME.
MYSTIQUE!
AH'M LOSIN' MY TOUCH. TIME WAS, AH'D KNOW YOU, NO MATTER WHO YOU LOOKED LIKE.
GIVE YOUR FOSTER MOTHER A HUG, SWEET-HEART.
CAREFUL! IF MY SKIN TOUCHES YOURS, AH'LL ABSORB YOUR POWER AN' PSYCHE.
I THOUGHT YOU JOINED THE X-MEN TO HAVE THAT PROBLEM FIXED.
YEAH, WELL, LIKE MICK JAGGER SAYS, "YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT."
ROGUE, THIS ISN'T A SOCIAL CALL.
DESTINY HAD A PRECOGNITIVE FLASH ABOUT THE X-MEN.
IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE...
...IN OR AROUND THE CITY OF DALLAS...
...THE X-MEN ARE GOING TO DIE!
I DIDN'T COME SIMPLY TO WARN YOU, GIRL...
THANKS, MYSTIQUE. AH APPRECIATE THE WARNIN'...
...BUT TO TAKE YOU AWAY!
ROGUE, IF YOU AREN'T WITH THE TEAM...
...YOU WON'T SHARE THEIR FATE!
THEY'RE MY FRIENDS, MYSTIQUE.
AH CARE FOR THEM AS MUCH AS AH DO FOR YOU.
AH CAN'T-- AH WON'T-- WALK OUT ON 'EM.
BUT YOU WILL ON ME.

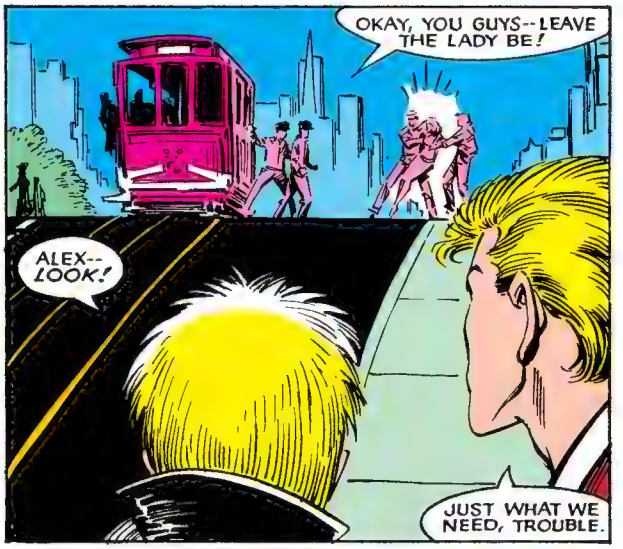

NIGHTTIME.
CLUB DV8, IN THE MISSION DISTRICT--
--SMALL SPACE, JAMMED TIGHT. AIR BOOMING WITH RAW, RAUNCHY ROCK 'N' ROLL.
SOLO STAR TURN-- LADY BILLED AS A FORMER BACK-UP SINGER FOR LILA CHENEY (WHOSE RECOMMENDATION GOT HER THE GIG).
AUDIENCE DOESN'T EXPECT MUCH.
THEIR SURPRISE, THEIR TREAT.
IT'S A ONE-IN-A-MILLION VOICE, PURE AS A CHOIR-GIRL ONE SONG...
... EARTHY AND WHISKEY-RICH, LIKE JOPLIN, THE NEXT.
TEMPERED WITH HURT, FUELED BY A PASSION THAT STIRS THE BLOOD, THE PERFORMANCE WINS OVER EVEN THIS TOUGHEST AND MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE OF CROWDS.
BUT-- AS THE SET BUILDS TO ITS CLIMAX...
KRAK!
WH-HIC-OOPS!
HEY, THE LIGHTS!
SOME DRUNK SHORTED THE WHOLE SYSTEM!
FIX IT, YOU GUYS! THE LADY CAN'T SING IN DARKNESS!
NO PROBLEM, FOLKS.
ALISON BLAIRE DOESN'T NEED DV8's LIGHTSHOW.
AS THE DAZZLER, SHE CAN PROVIDE HER OWN!
?
!
HEY, IS SHE GLOWING?!
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, MAN. PEOPLE DON'T GLOW.
MUTIES DO.
WAY TO GO!
WHO CARES? IT'S THE MUSIC THAT MATTERS.
ENJOY THAT, FELLA. FORGET THE REST!

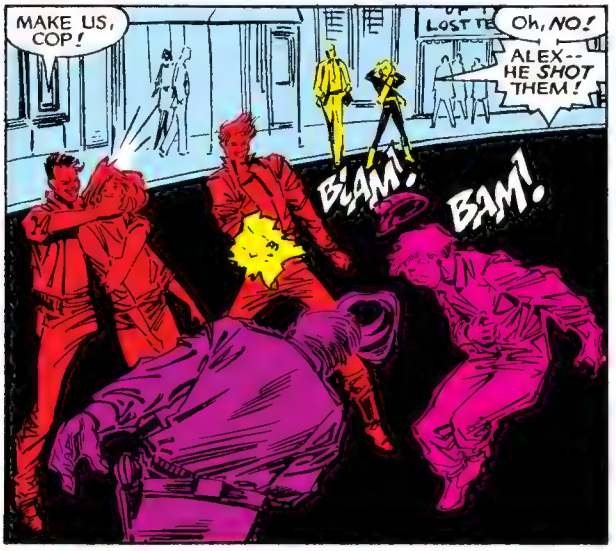

TOO SOON, IT SEEMS-- FOR PERFORMER AND AUDIENCE BOTH-- THE SHOW IS OVER.
SHE TRIES TO DAMP DOWN HER RADIANCE...
...BUT THE APPLAUSE AND CHEERS ACT LIKE A DRUG...
...CASTING HER SOUL TO THE STARS.
SHE'S SO HAPPY, SHE CAN'T STOP GLOWING.
IT'S A MOOD, A MOMENT...
...SHE WANTS TO LAST FOREVER.
THIS IS WHAT SHE LOVES, WHAT GIVES HER LIFE TRUE MEANING, WHAT SHE WAS BORN FOR!
WOLVERINE-- DO YOU HEAR-- THEY LIKE ME, THEY REALLY LIKE ME!
A LOT TO LIKE, DARLIN'.
THANKS.
YOU'VE NO IDEA...
...HOW MUCH THIS MEANS TO ME.
HATE TO SPOIL THINGS, ALI, BUT YOU BETTER START FIGURIN' HOW MUCH THIS'LL COST.
YOU'RE A MUTANT, DAZZLER--AND AN X-MAN.
GOIN' PUBLIC WITH YOUR POWERS...
...LIKE YOU JUST DID...
...MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THE SMARTEST OF PLAYS.
'SPECIALLY WHEN THE TEAM'S TRYIN' TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE.
YOU MEAN I SCREWED UP.
AGAIN.
SEEMS SOMETIMES THAT'S ALL I DO.
I'M SORRY, WOLVERINE.
DON'T BE "SORRY," GIRL.
JUST, NEXT TIME, THINK HARDER. DO BETTER.
THERE MAY NOT BE A "NEXT TIME," BOSS. OR A FUTURE.
ROGUE!
FOR ALI-- YOU-- ME-- ANY OF US.


MEANWHILE, DOWNTOWN--OFF MARKET, NEAR UNION SQUARE...
RAIDERS OF THE LOST TEMPLE
WOW! HAVOK, THIS MOVIE-PICTURE WAS GREAT!
WE'RE IN PUBLIC, LONGSHOT, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO USE MY REAL NAME.
Oops. SORRY.
YOU ALL HAVE SO MANY, I GET CONFUSED KEEPING TRACK.
TICKETS
RAIDERS OF THE LOST TEMPLE

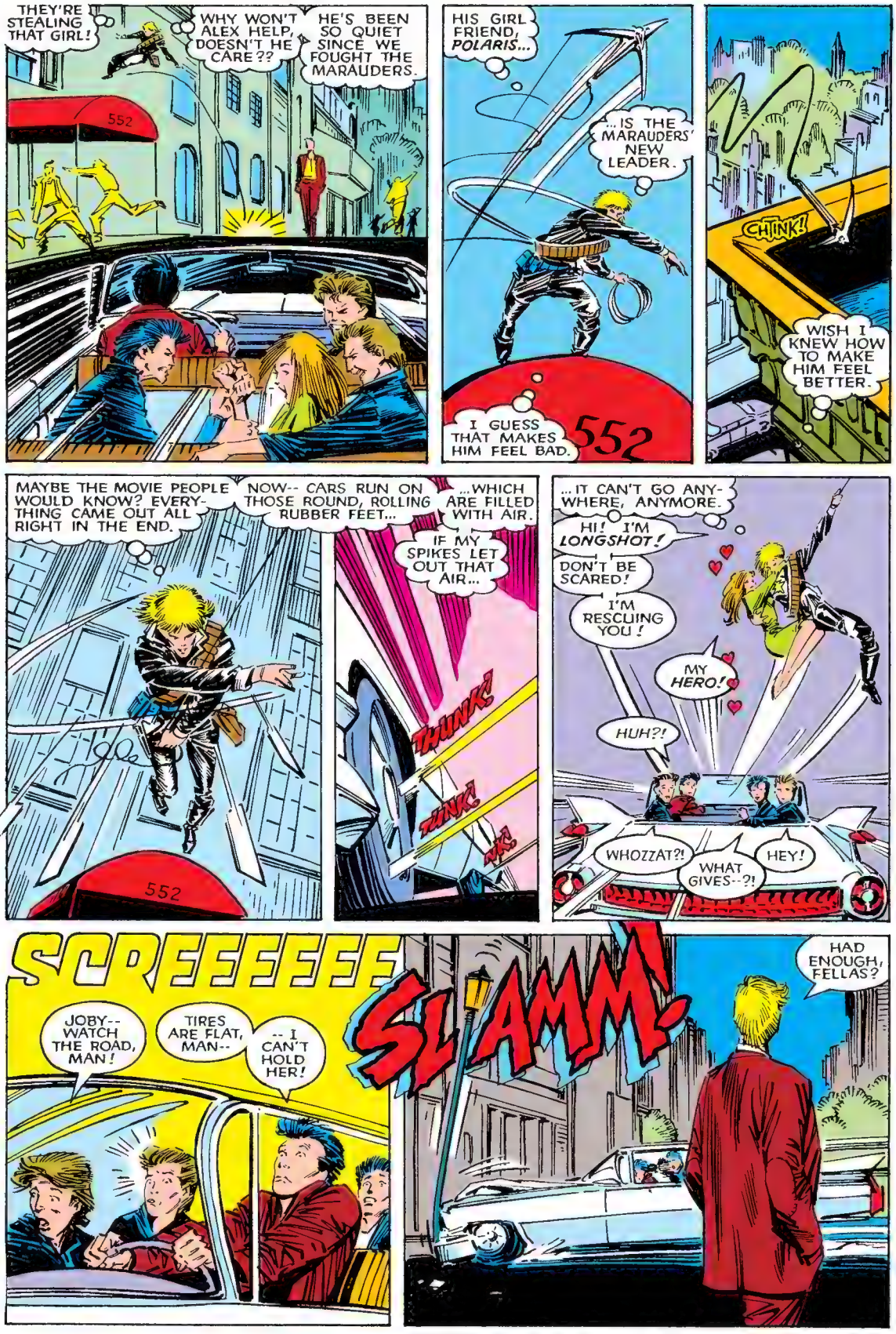

NO PROBLEM.
THERE WAS A STUNT-MAN IN THE MOVIE WITH THE SAME NAME AS ME!
AND A GIRL WHO HAS THE NEATEST NAME EVER:
...RICOCHET RITA!
THAT'S NICE.

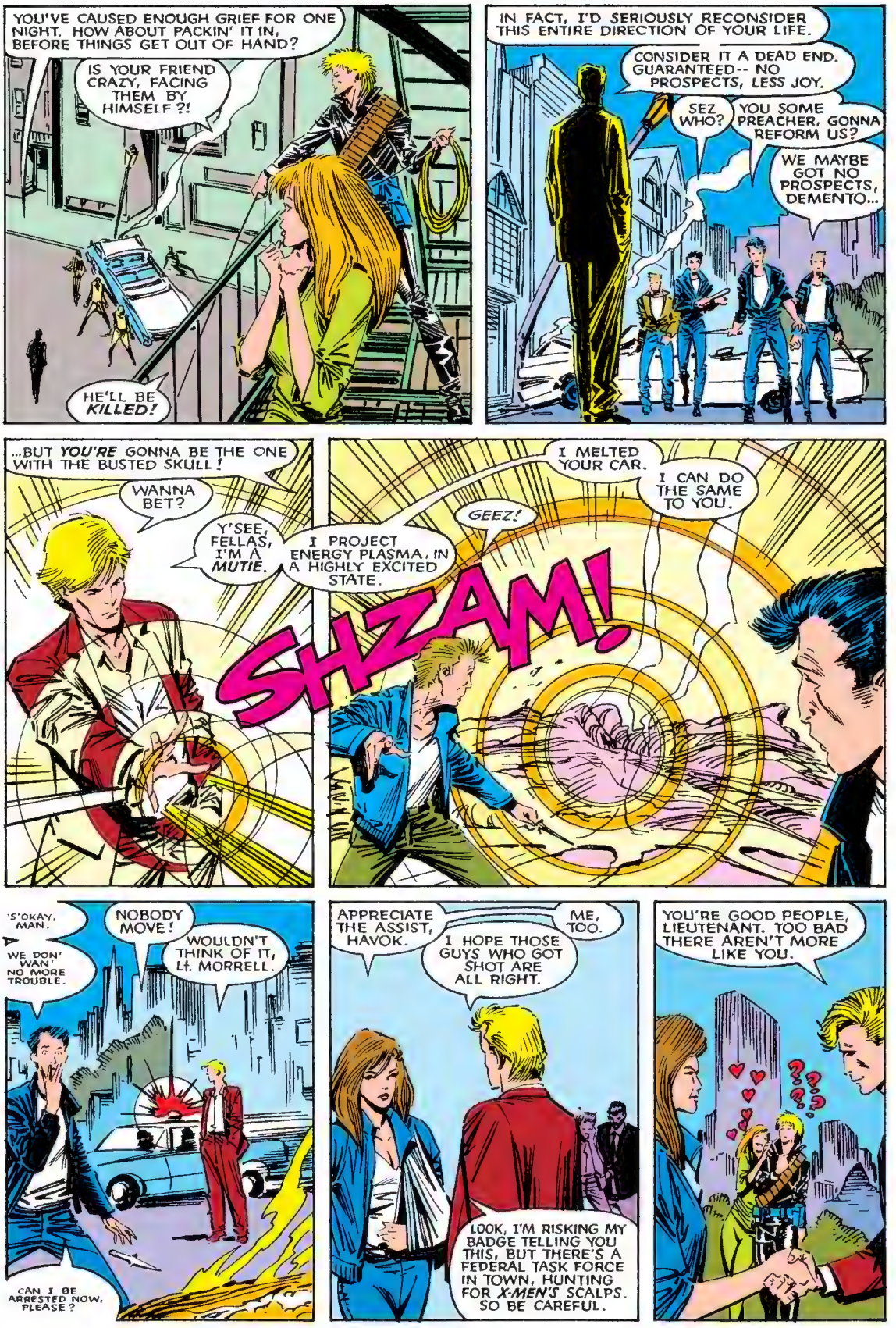
D'YOU THINK WE COULD MAYBE MEET THEM SOMETIME, AND BE FRIENDS?
ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE.
BUT THEY'RE MOVIE PEOPLE, PAL...
...SO DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP TOO HIGH.
?


OKAY, YOU GUYS--LEAVE THE LADY BE!
ALEX--LOOK!
JUST WHAT WE NEED, TROUBLE.


MAKE US, COP!
Oh, NO!
ALEX--HE SHOT THEM!
BLAM!
BAM!

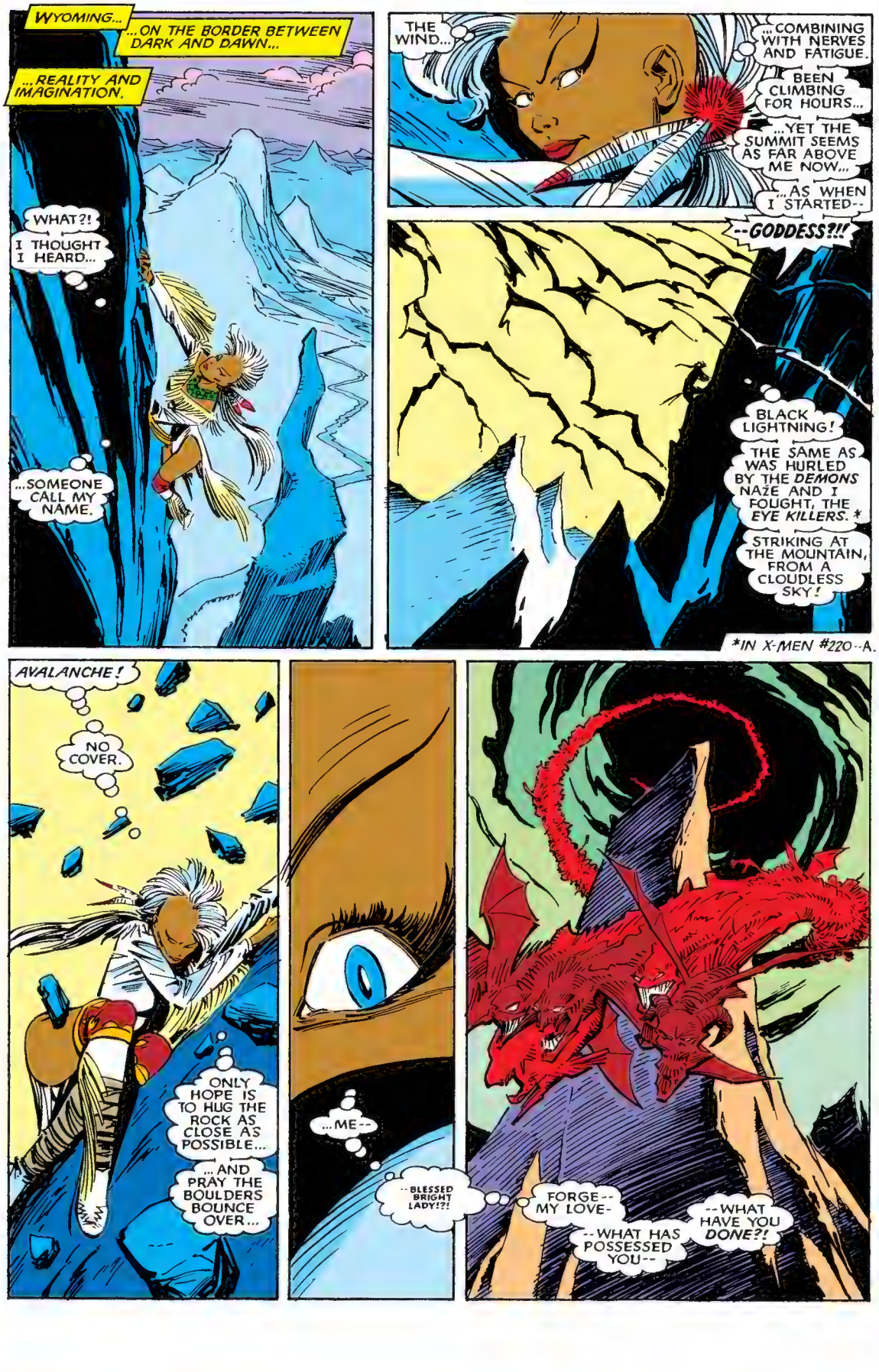
YOUR LUCKY NIGHT, SWEETS!
YOU GET TO PARTY...
...WITH THE BAY CITY BADLAND BOPPERS!
ROLL THIS HEAP, JOBY!
AIN'T P'LITE TA KEEP A LADY WAITING!

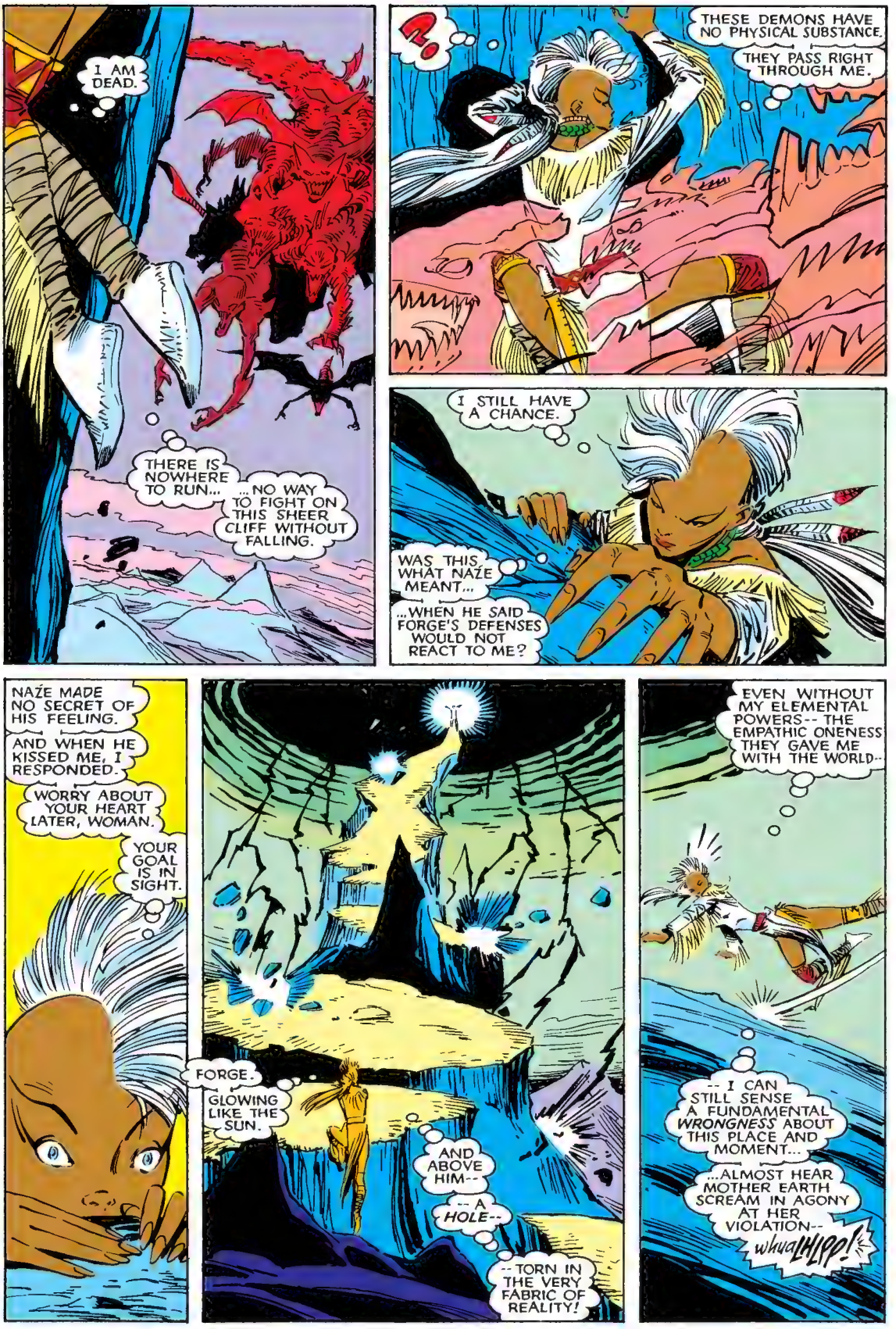

THEY'RE STEALING THAT GIRL!
WHY WON'T ALEX HELP, DOESN'T HE CARE??
HE'S BEEN SO QUIET SINCE WE FOUGHT THE MARAUDERS.
552
HIS GIRL FRIEND, POLARIS...
...IS THE MARAUDERS' NEW LEADER.
I GUESS THAT MAKES HIM FEEL BAD.
552
CHINK!
WISH I KNEW HOW TO MAKE HIM FEEL BETTER.
MAYBE THE MOVIE PEOPLE WOULD KNOW? EVERYTHING CAME OUT ALL RIGHT IN THE END.
NOW-- CARS RUN ON THOSE ROUND, ROLLING RUBBER FEET...
...WHICH ARE FILLED WITH AIR.
552
IF MY SPIKES LET OUT THAT AIR...
THINK!
THINK!
...IT CAN'T GO ANYWHERE, ANYMORE.
HI! I'M LONGSHOT!
DON'T BE SCARED!
I'M RESCUING YOU!
MY HERO!
HUH?!
WHOZZAT?!
WHAT GIVES--?!
HEY!
SCREEEEEEE
JOBY-- WATCH THE ROAD, MAN!
TIRES ARE FLAT, MAN--
-- I CAN'T HOLD HER!
SLAMM!
HAD ENOUGH, FELLAS?

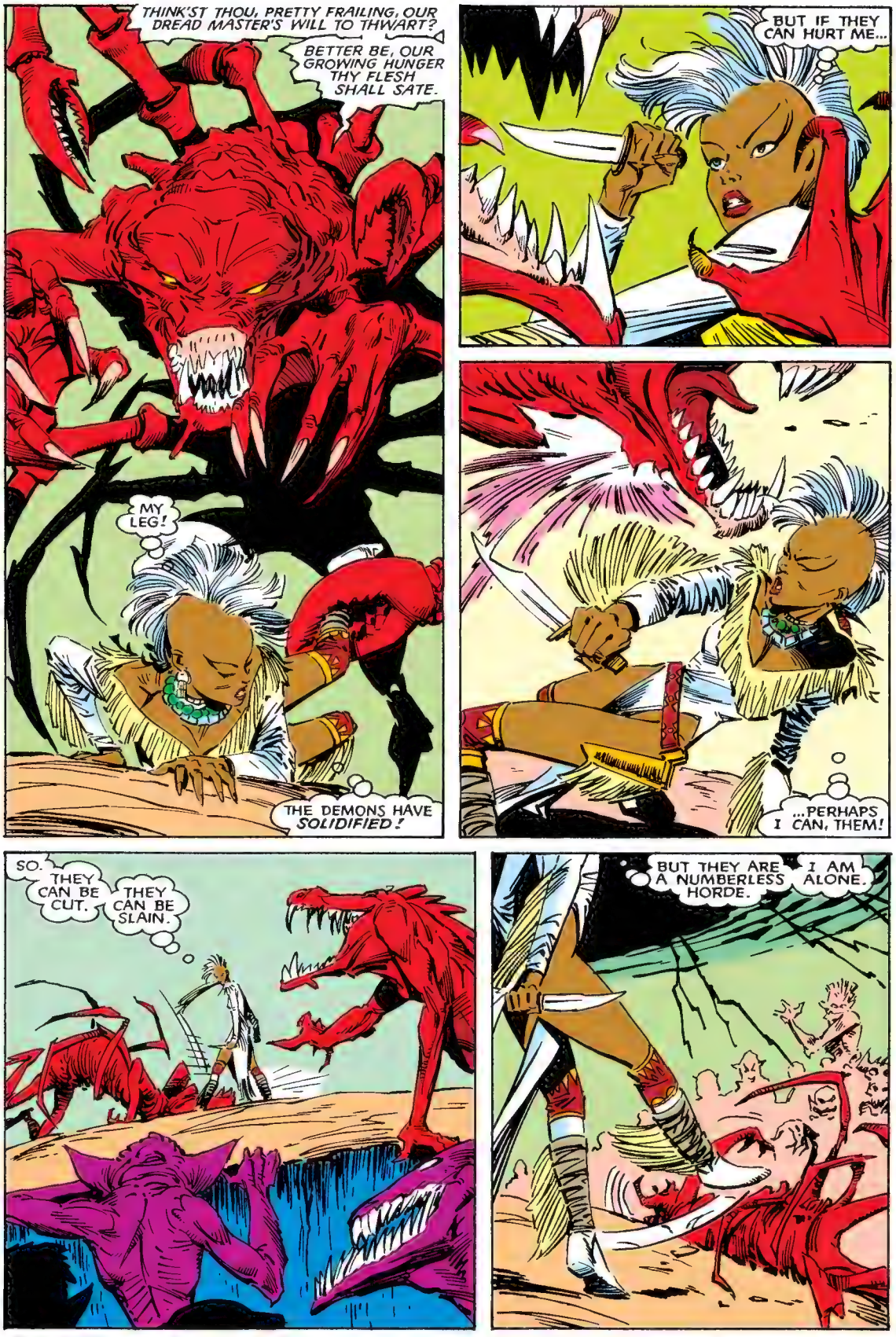

YOU'VE CAUSED ENOUGH GRIEF FOR ONE NIGHT. HOW ABOUT PACKIN' IT IN, BEFORE THINGS GET OUT OF HAND?
IS YOUR FRIEND CRAZY, FACING THEM BY HIMSELF?!
HE'LL BE KILLED!
IN FACT, I'D SERIOUSLY RECONSIDER THIS ENTIRE DIRECTION OF YOUR LIFE.
CONSIDER IT A DEAD END. GUARANTEED-- NO PROSPECTS, LESS JOY.
SEZ WHO?
YOU SOME PREACHER, GONNA REFORM US?
WE MAYBE GOT NO PROSPECTS, DEMENTO...
...BUT YOU'RE GONNA BE THE ONE WITH THE BUSTED SKULL!
WANNA BET?
Y'SEE, FELLAS, I'M A MUTIE.
I PROJECT ENERGY PLASMA, IN A HIGHLY EXCITED STATE.
SHZAM!
I MELTED YOUR CAR.
I CAN DO THE SAME TO YOU.
GEEZ!
'S'OKAY, MAN.
WE DON' WAN' NO MORE TROUBLE.
NOBODY MOVE!
WOULDN'T THINK OF IT, Lt. MORRELL.
CAN I BE ARRESTED NOW, PLEASE?
APPRECIATE THE ASSIST, HAVOK.
ME, TOO.
I HOPE THOSE GUYS WHO GOT SHOT ARE ALL RIGHT.
LOOK, I'M RISKING MY BADGE TELLING YOU THIS, BUT THERE'S A FEDERAL TASK FORCE IN TOWN, HUNTING FOR X-MEN'S SCALPS. SO BE CAREFUL.
YOU'RE GOOD PEOPLE, LIEUTENANT. TOO BAD THERE AREN'T MORE LIKE YOU.
?!?!

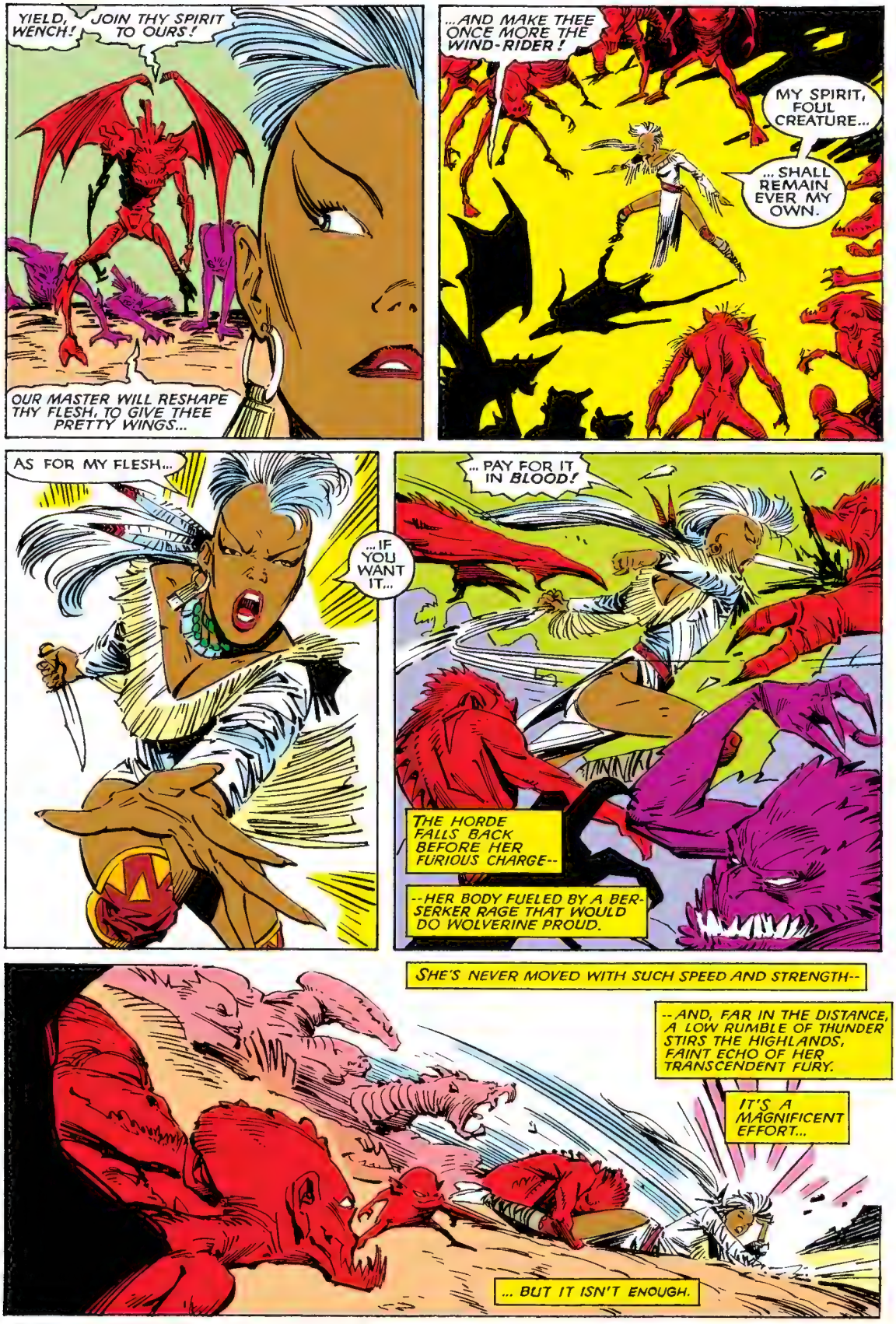
ALCATRAZ--
--LATER...
...THE LIEUTENANT WAS REAL UPSET, SHE'D GONE TO THE MAT TO PROTECT US BUT GOT OVERRULED.
ANYWAY, THE LADY LONGSHOT SAVED GAVE HIM HER PHONE NUMBER--
-- KID'S BUILDING QUITE A COLLECTION-- AND WE SPLIT FOR HERE.
FEDS ARE FREEDOM FORCE.
MYSTIQUE LEADS 'EM. SHE AN' HER PARTNER, DESTINY, THEY PRETTY MUCH RAISED ME, THEY'RE MORE MY FOLKS THAN MY NATURAL PARENTS.
DESTINY "READS" TIME-LINES, SHE CAN FORETELL THE FUTURE. ACCORDING TO HER...
... THE X-MEN DON'T HAVE ANY.
LADY'S BEEN WRONG BEFORE-- BUT WE CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE THE CHANCE.
ROGUE SAYS DESTINY CLAIMS STORM'S THE KEY. TROUBLE IS, ORORO'S ON A PRIVATE MISSION, AN' WE GOT NO WAY TO CONTACT HER.
SO I'M GOIN' AFTER HER. STANDS TO REASON, THOUGH, THAT WHOEVER COMES ALONG IS AT RISK.
IF DALLAS IS THE CRITICAL DANGER ZONE, SAFEST PLAY IS NOT TO GO THERE.
ME, I NEVER PLAYED IT SAFE IN MY LIFE.
AIN'T ABOUT TO START.
BUT I'M ALSO NOT ASKIN' FOR HELP. AN' I WON'T THINK LESS OF ANYONE WHO CHOOSES TO DEAL HIMSELF OUT.
YO, SHORT-STUFF--
-- SO, LIKE, WHO WANTS TO LIVE FOREVER?
WHAT THIS COMES DOWN TO IS OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL SURVIVAL VERSUS THE TEAM'S.
STANDING ALONE, OR STANDING TOGETHER.
I'M AN X-MAN, WOLVERINE.
I STAND BY MY FRIENDS...
...AND WITH THE TEAM.

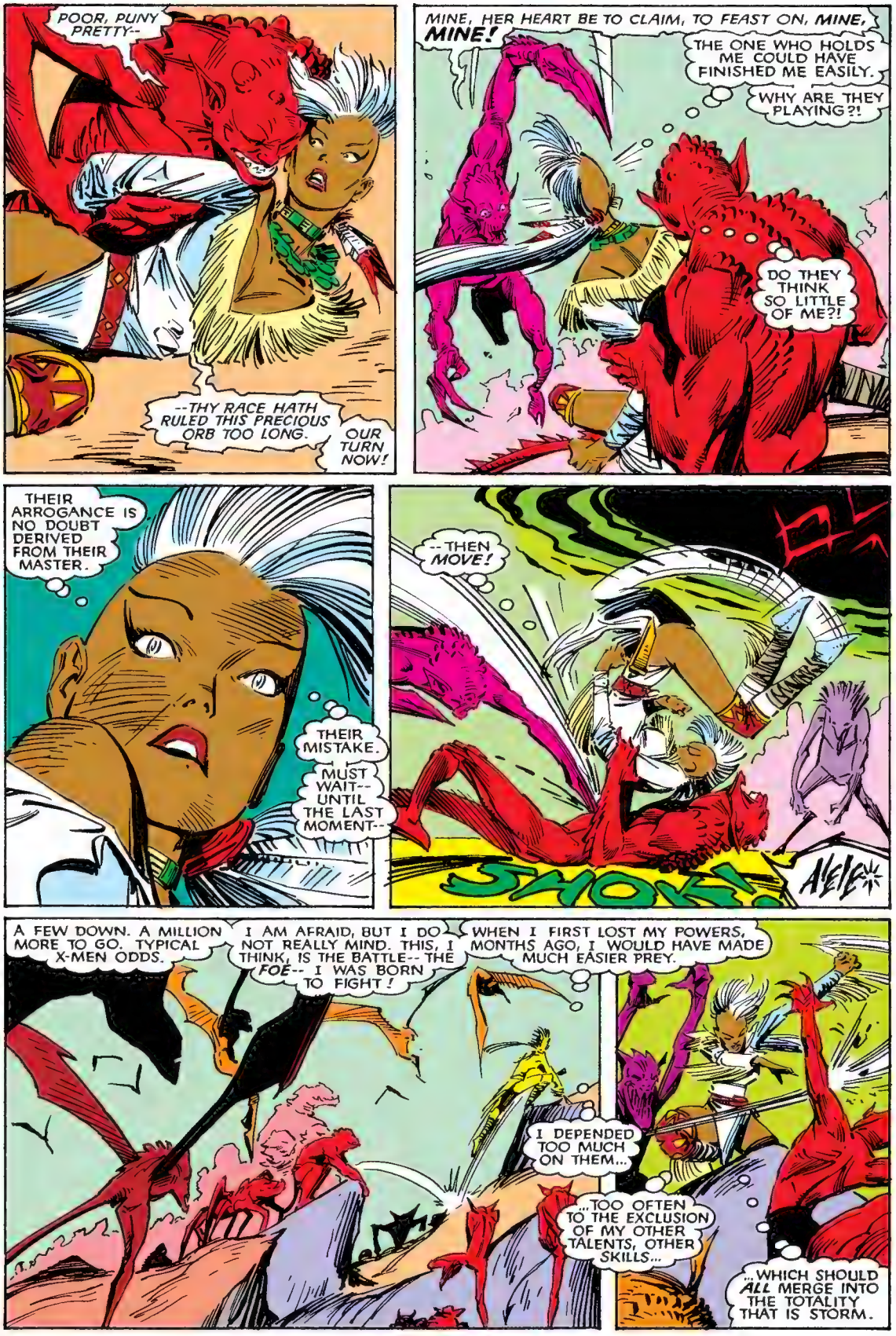
YOU FEEL THE SAME, PSYLOCKE?
OF COURSE, MY FRIEND.
I AM WITH YOU, WOLVERINE-- TO THE END.
IF STORM IS IN DANGER, HOW CAN WE NOT HELP HER?
I HAD A GOOD EVENING TONIGHT. MAYBE THIS IS WHY.
THE LAST FEAST FOR THE CONDEMNED SOUL.
I'LL TELL YOU THE TRUTH, WOLVERINE, I'M SCARED STIFF.
I DON'T WANT TO DIE.
BUT IF I WALK AWAY NOW-- I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SAY-- I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO LIVE WITH MYSELF.
COUNT ME IN, TOO, WOLVERINE.
THE DEVIL I WILL.
YOU'RE NOT AN X-MAN, MADELYNE, OR EVEN A MUTANT. YOU'RE A CIVILIAN. THIS ISN'T YOUR FIGHT. MOREOVER, WE CAN'T SPARE ANYONE TO LOOK AFTER YOU WHEN THINGS GET ROUGH.
AND WHAT CHANCE WILL I HAVE IF I'M LEFT BEHIND?
HOW LONG TILL THE MARAUDERS FIND ME?
YOU SAY, IF I COME WITH YOU, I MAY DIE.
IF I'M LEFT ON MY OWN, CHUM, I WILL.
Ms. PRYOR HAS A POINT, WOLVERINE.
SHE'S MY BROTHER'S WIFE. I'LL WATCH OUT FOR HER.
BLAZES!
HAVE IT YOUR OWN WAY, THEN.
LET'S ROLL!
NO NEED FOR GRUMPS, BOSS.
LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE.
AT LEAST, WITH MADELYNE, WE FINALLY GOT OURSELVES A FIRST CLASS PILOT. Y'ALL DON'T HAVE TO PUT UP WITH ME ANYMORE.
I'LL TRY TO CONTACT STORM TELEPATHICALLY.
I DOUBT SHE'S IN RANGE-- BUT ONE NEVER KNOWS...
STORM-- DO YOU HEAR ME-- ARE YOU IN DANGER--
--STORM!?!

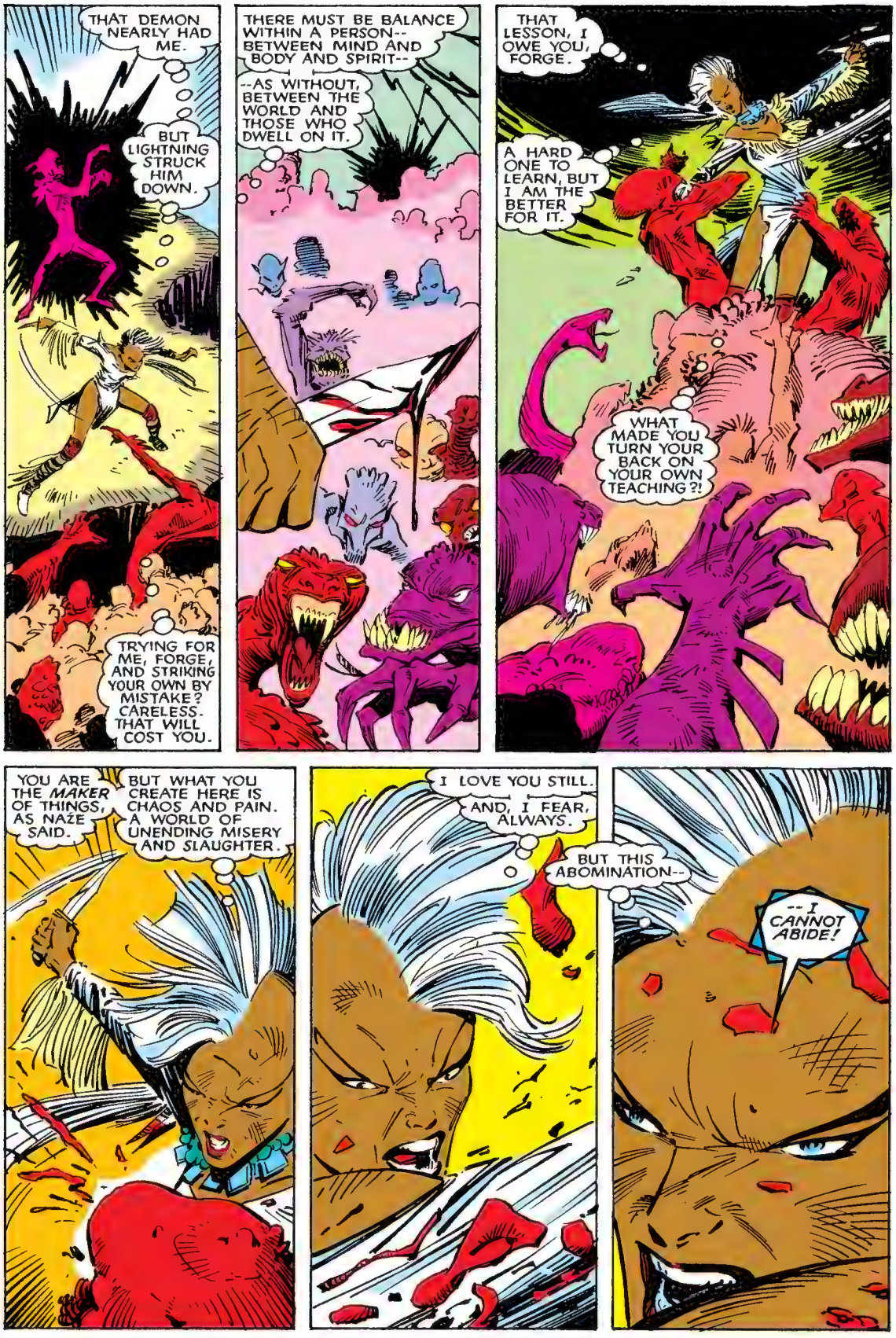

WYOMING...
...ON THE BORDER BETWEEN DARK AND DAWN...
...REALITY AND IMAGINATION.
WHAT?!
I THOUGHT I HEARD...
...SOMEONE CALL MY NAME.
THE WIND...
...COMBINING WITH NERVES AND FATIGUE.
BEEN CLIMBING FOR HOURS...
...YET THE SUMMIT SEEMS AS FAR ABOVE ME NOW...
...AS WHEN I STARTED--
--GODDESS?!!
BLACK LIGHTNING!
THE SAME AS WAS HURLED BY THE DEMONS NAZE AND I FOUGHT, THE EYE KILLERS. *
STRIKING AT THE MOUNTAIN, FROM A CLOUDLESS SKY!
*IN X-MEN #220--A.
AVALANCHE!
NO COVER.
ONLY HOPE IS TO HUG THE ROCK AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE...
...AND PRAY THE BOULDERS BOUNCE OVER...
...ME--
--BLESSED BRIGHT LADY!?!
FORGE-- MY LOVE--
--WHAT HAS POSSESSED YOU--
--WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!


I AM DEAD.
THERE IS NOWHERE TO RUN...
...NO WAY TO FIGHT ON THIS SHEER CLIFF WITHOUT FALLING.
THESE DEMONS HAVE NO PHYSICAL SUBSTANCE.
THEY PASS RIGHT THROUGH ME.
I STILL HAVE A CHANCE.
WAS THIS WHAT NAŻE MEANT...
...WHEN HE SAID FORGE'S DEFENSES WOULD NOT REACT TO ME?
NAŻE MADE NO SECRET OF HIS FEELING.
AND WHEN HE KISSED ME, I RESPONDED.
WORRY ABOUT YOUR HEART LATER, WOMAN.
YOUR GOAL IS IN SIGHT.
FORGE.
GLOWING LIKE THE SUN.
AND ABOVE HIM--
--A HOLE--
--TORN IN THE VERY FABRIC OF REALITY!
EVEN WITHOUT MY ELEMENTAL POWERS-- THE EMPATHIC ONENESS THEY GAVE ME WITH THE WORLD--
-- I CAN STILL SENSE A FUNDAMENTAL WRONGNESS ABOUT THIS PLACE AND MOMENT...
...ALMOST HEAR MOTHER EARTH SCREAM IN AGONY AT HER VIOLATION--
whuaLHLPP!


THINK'ST THOU, PRETTY FRAILING, OUR DREAD MASTER'S WILL TO THWART?
BETTER BE, OUR GROWING HUNGER THY FLESH SHALL SATE.
MY LEG!
THE DEMONS HAVE SOLIDIFIED!
BUT IF THEY CAN HURT ME...
...PERHAPS I CAN, THEM!
SO. THEY CAN BE CUT. THEY CAN BE SLAIN.
BUT THEY ARE A NUMBERLESS HORDE.
I AM ALONE.

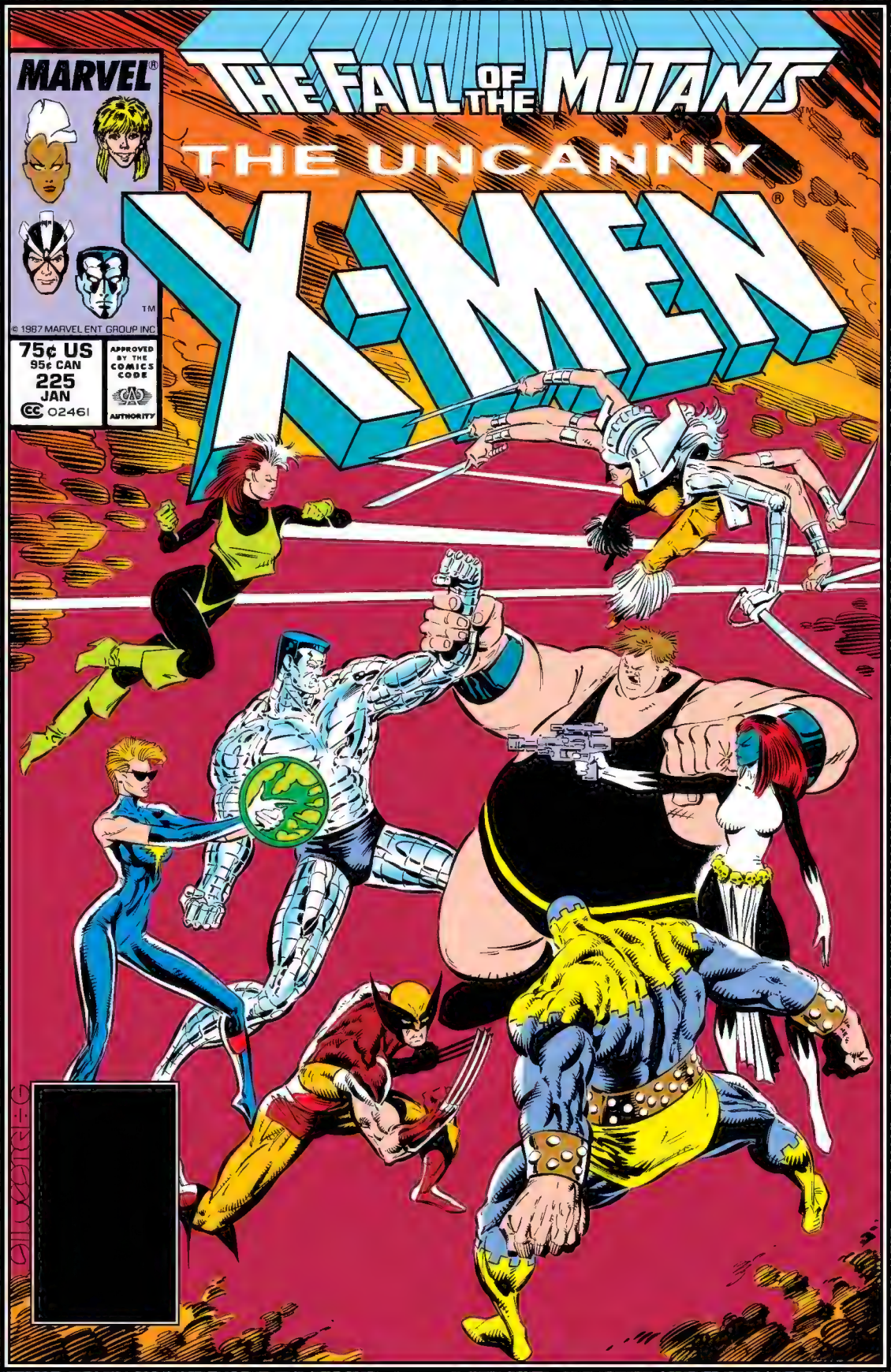

YIELD, WENCH! JOIN THY SPIRIT TO OURS!
OUR MASTER WILL RESHAPE THY FLESH, TO GIVE THEE PRETTY WINGS...
...AND MAKE THEE ONCE MORE THE WIND-RIDER!
MY SPIRIT, FOUL CREATURE...
...SHALL REMAIN EVER MY OWN.
AS FOR MY FLESH...
...IF YOU WANT IT...
... PAY FOR IT IN BLOOD!
THE HORDE FALLS BACK BEFORE HER FURIOUS CHARGE--
--HER BODY FUELED BY A BERSERKER RAGE THAT WOULD DO WOLVERINE PROUD.
SHE'S NEVER MOVED WITH SUCH SPEED AND STRENGTH--
--AND, FAR IN THE DISTANCE, A LOW RUMBLE OF THUNDER STIRS THE HIGHLANDS, FAINT ECHO OF HER TRANSCENDENT FURY.
IT'S A MAGNIFICENT EFFORT...
... BUT IT ISN'T ENOUGH.


POOR, PUNY PRETTY--
--THY RACE HATH RULED THIS PRECIOUS ORB TOO LONG.
OUR TURN NOW!
MINE, HER HEART BE TO CLAIM, TO FEAST ON, MINE, MINE!
THE ONE WHO HOLDS ME COULD HAVE FINISHED ME EASILY.
WHY ARE THEY PLAYING?!
DO THEY THINK SO LITTLE OF ME?!
THEIR ARROGANCE IS NO DOUBT DERIVED FROM THEIR MASTER.
THEIR MISTAKE.
MUST WAIT-- UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT--
--THEN MOVE!
SHOK!
A FEW DOWN. A MILLION MORE TO GO. TYPICAL X-MEN ODDS.
I AM AFRAID, BUT I DO NOT REALLY MIND. THIS, I THINK, IS THE BATTLE-- THE FOE-- I WAS BORN TO FIGHT!
WHEN I FIRST LOST MY POWERS, MONTHS AGO, I WOULD HAVE MADE MUCH EASIER PREY.
I DEPENDED TOO MUCH ON THEM...
...TOO OFTEN TO THE EXCLUSION OF MY OTHER TALENTS, OTHER SKILLS...
...WHICH SHOULD ALL MERGE INTO THE TOTALITY THAT IS STORM.


THAT DEMON NEARLY HAD ME.
BUT LIGHTNING STRUCK HIM DOWN.
TRYING FOR ME, FORGE, AND STRIKING YOUR OWN BY MISTAKE? CARELESS. THAT WILL COST YOU.
THERE MUST BE BALANCE WITHIN A PERSON-- BETWEEN MIND AND BODY AND SPIRIT--
--AS WITHOUT, BETWEEN THE WORLD AND THOSE WHO DWELL ON IT.
THAT LESSON, I OWE YOU, FORGE.
A HARD ONE TO LEARN, BUT I AM THE BETTER FOR IT.
WHAT MADE YOU TURN YOUR BACK ON YOUR OWN TEACHING?!
YOU ARE THE MAKER OF THINGS, AS NAŻE SAID.
BUT WHAT YOU CREATE HERE IS CHAOS AND PAIN. A WORLD OF UNENDING MISERY AND SLAUGHTER.
I LOVE YOU STILL.
AND, I FEAR, ALWAYS.
BUT THIS ABOMINATION--
-- I CANNOT ABIDE!

DID NAŻE CAST SOME SECRET SPELL TO AID ME? I HAVE REACHED THE SUMMIT AND I STILL LIVE.
GODDESS, IF ONLY THERE WAS ANOTHER WAY.
HOW STRONG HE LOOKS.
FORGE!
WHO?
ORORO?!
HOW DID YOU FIND ME?
WHY ARE YOU HERE?!
NAŻE SHOWED ME THE WAY.
AND I HAVE COME...
...TO PUT AN *END* TO THIS MADNESS!
THE GATE YOU SEEK TO OPEN WOULD HAVE DESTROYED THE WORLD.
I CANNOT ALLOW THAT.
YOU'RE... WRONG.
I WAS... TRYING... TO *CLOSE* THE GATE.
NOT DESTROY THE WORLD, STORM--
--BUT *SAVE* IT!

NO!
YOUR WORDS-- I SENSE-- I KNOW-- THEY RING TRUE!
AND YOUR EYES...
...FAR MORE SANE THAN MINE.
THE DEMONS-- REANIMATED-- NUMBERLESS-- MORE FIERCE THAN BEFORE-- CLOSING IN FOR THE KILL!
I WAS WRONG.
YOU WERE TRICKED.
FORGIVE ME.
ALWAYS.
AND WITH THAT WORD, A LAST EMBRACE, HE KICKS THEM BOTH OFF THE PRECIPICE.
YET-- BEFORE THEY CAN EVEN BEGIN TO FALL...
...THEY ARE CONSUMED.
A'EIE-- THEIR ACCURSED SOUL-LIGHT!
SO PURE, IT BURNS!
THEIR FIERY ESSENCES ARE IMMEDIATELY DRAWN UPWARDS...
...INTO THE GAPING MAW OF THE GATEWAY--
--LEAVING NOT THE SLIGHTEST TRACE THEY HAD EVER BEEN.
AS ENDS THE SHAMAN--
--SO ENDS HIS AERIE!
AND, WITH A FORCE UNHEARD--UNFELT-- SINCE-THE WORLD'S DAWN, FORGE'S MOUNTAIN OF POWER IS SHATTERED TO DUST.
SKABOOM!!
YOU PLAYED YOUR PART TO PERFECTION, WIND-RIDER. YOU AND FORGE WERE THE ONLY TWO CAPABLE OF STOPPING ME, AN' WITH YOU BOTH GONE...
...THE WORLD IS MINE.
FOR AS LONG AS IT LASTS.
NOT TOO SHABBY.
IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.
AND THE FUN'S ONLY JUST BEGUN!
NEXT: FALSE DAWN


MARVEL
THE FALL OF THE MUTANTS
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
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225
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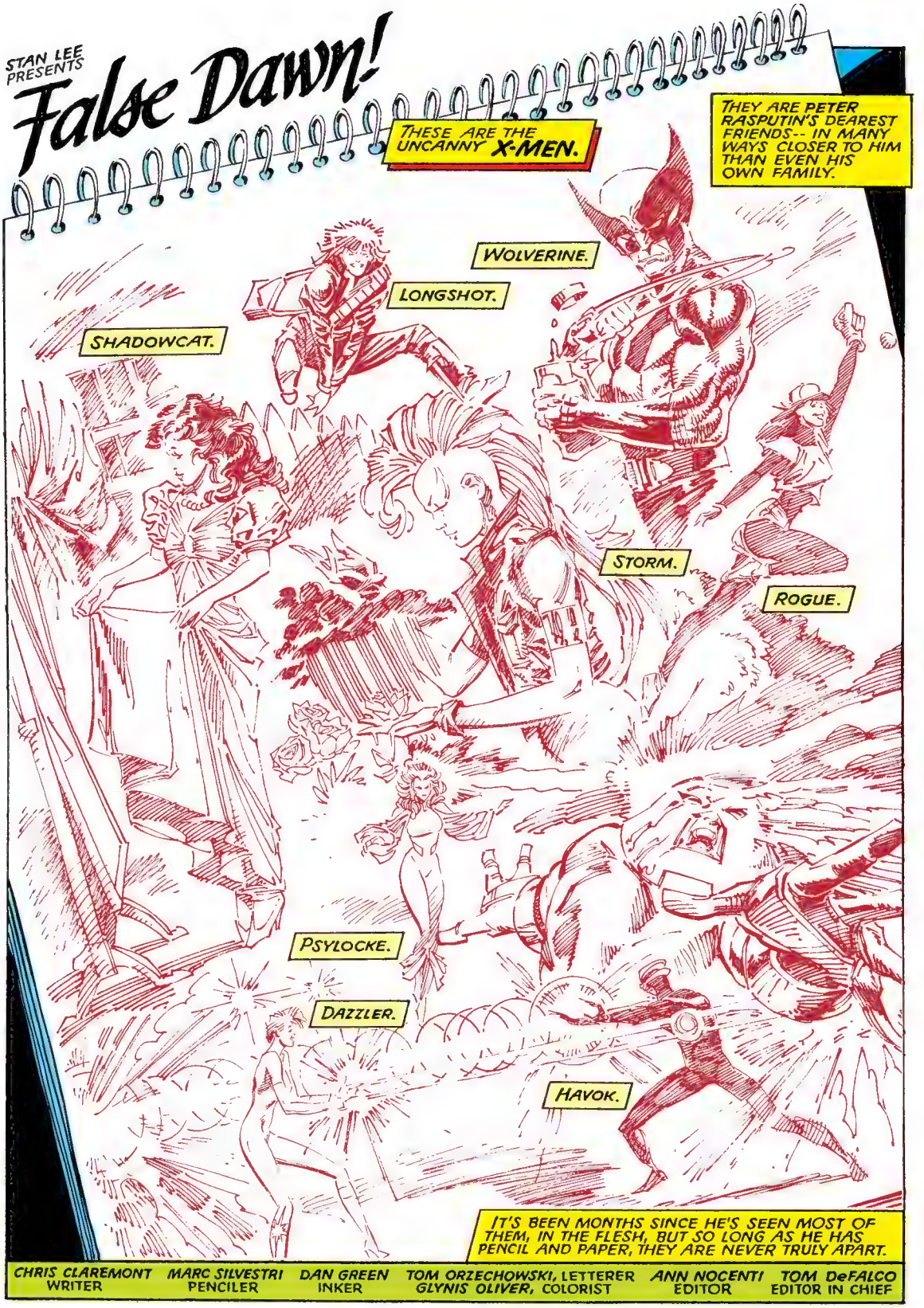
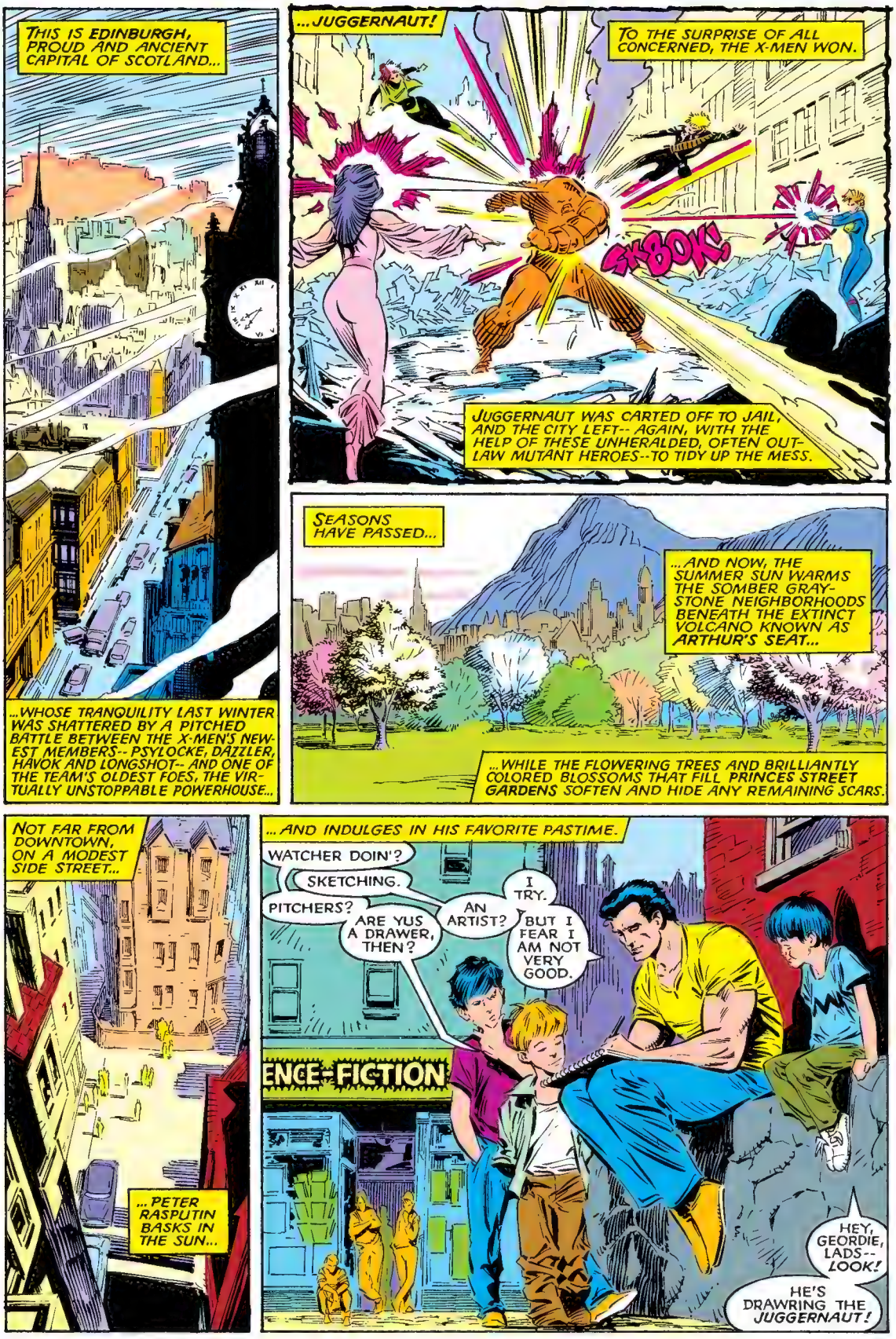
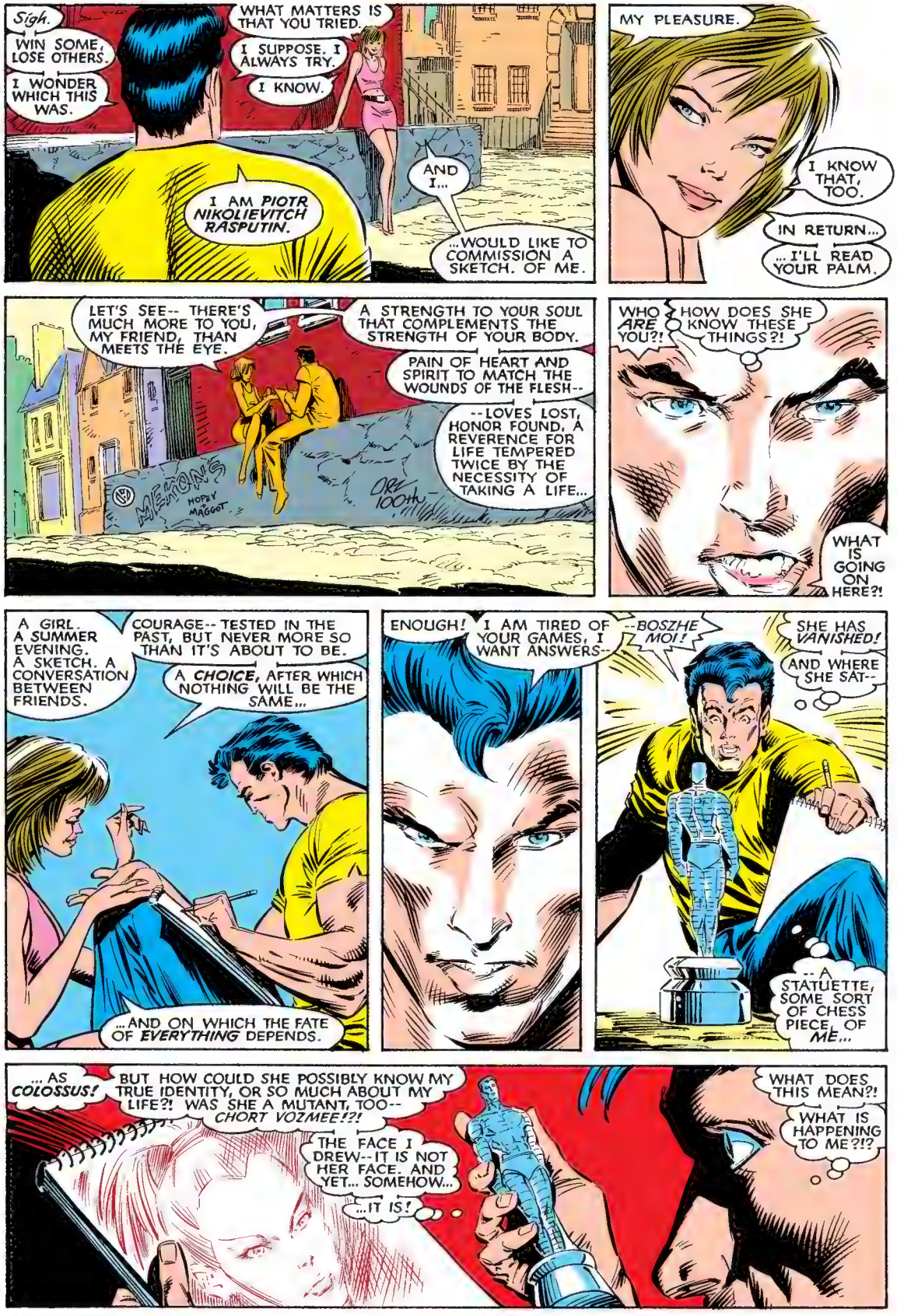

STAN LEE PRESENTS
False Dawn!
THESE ARE THE UNCANNY X-MEN.
THEY ARE PETER RASPUTIN'S DEAREST FRIENDS-- IN MANY WAYS CLOSER TO HIM THAN EVEN HIS OWN FAMILY.
WOLVERINE.
LONGSHOT.
SHADOWCAT.
STORM.
ROGUE.
PSYLOCKE.
DAZZLER.
HAVOK.
IT'S BEEN MONTHS SINCE HE'S SEEN MOST OF THEM, IN THE FLESH, BUT SO LONG AS HE HAS PENCIL AND PAPER, THEY ARE NEVER TRULY APART.
CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER
MARC SILVESTRI PENCILER
DAN GREEN INKER
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST
ANN NOCENTI EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF


THIS IS EDINBURGH, PROUD AND ANCIENT CAPITAL OF SCOTLAND...
...WHOSE TRANQUILITY LAST WINTER WAS SHATTERED BY A PITCHED BATTLE BETWEEN THE X-MEN'S NEWEST MEMBERS-- PSYLOCKE, DAZZLER, HAVOK AND LONGSHOT-- AND ONE OF THE TEAM'S OLDEST FOES, THE VIRTUALLY UNSTOPPABLE POWERHOUSE...
...JUGGERNAUT!
SKBOK!
TO THE SURPRISE OF ALL CONCERNED, THE X-MEN WON.
JUGGERNAUT WAS CARTED OFF TO JAIL, AND THE CITY LEFT-- AGAIN, WITH THE HELP OF THESE UNHERALDED, OFTEN OUTLAW MUTANT HEROES--TO TIDY UP THE MESS.
SEASONS HAVE PASSED...
...AND NOW, THE SUMMER SUN WARMS THE SOMBER GRAY-STONE NEIGHBORHOODS BENEATH THE EXTINCT VOLCANO KNOWN AS ARTHUR'S SEAT...
...WHILE THE FLOWERING TREES AND BRILLIANTLY COLORED BLOSSOMS THAT FILL PRINCES STREET GARDENS SOFTEN AND HIDE ANY REMAINING SCARS.
NOT FAR FROM DOWNTOWN, ON A MODEST SIDE STREET...
...PETER RASPUTIN BASKS IN THE SUN...
...AND INDULGES IN HIS FAVORITE PASTIME.
WATCHER DOIN'?
SKETCHING.
I TRY.
PITCHERS?
ARE YUS A DRAWER, THEN?
AN ARTIST?
BUT I FEAR I AM NOT VERY GOOD.
ENCE-FICTION
HEY, GEORDIE, LADS-- LOOK!
HE'S DRAWRING THE JUGGERNAUT!

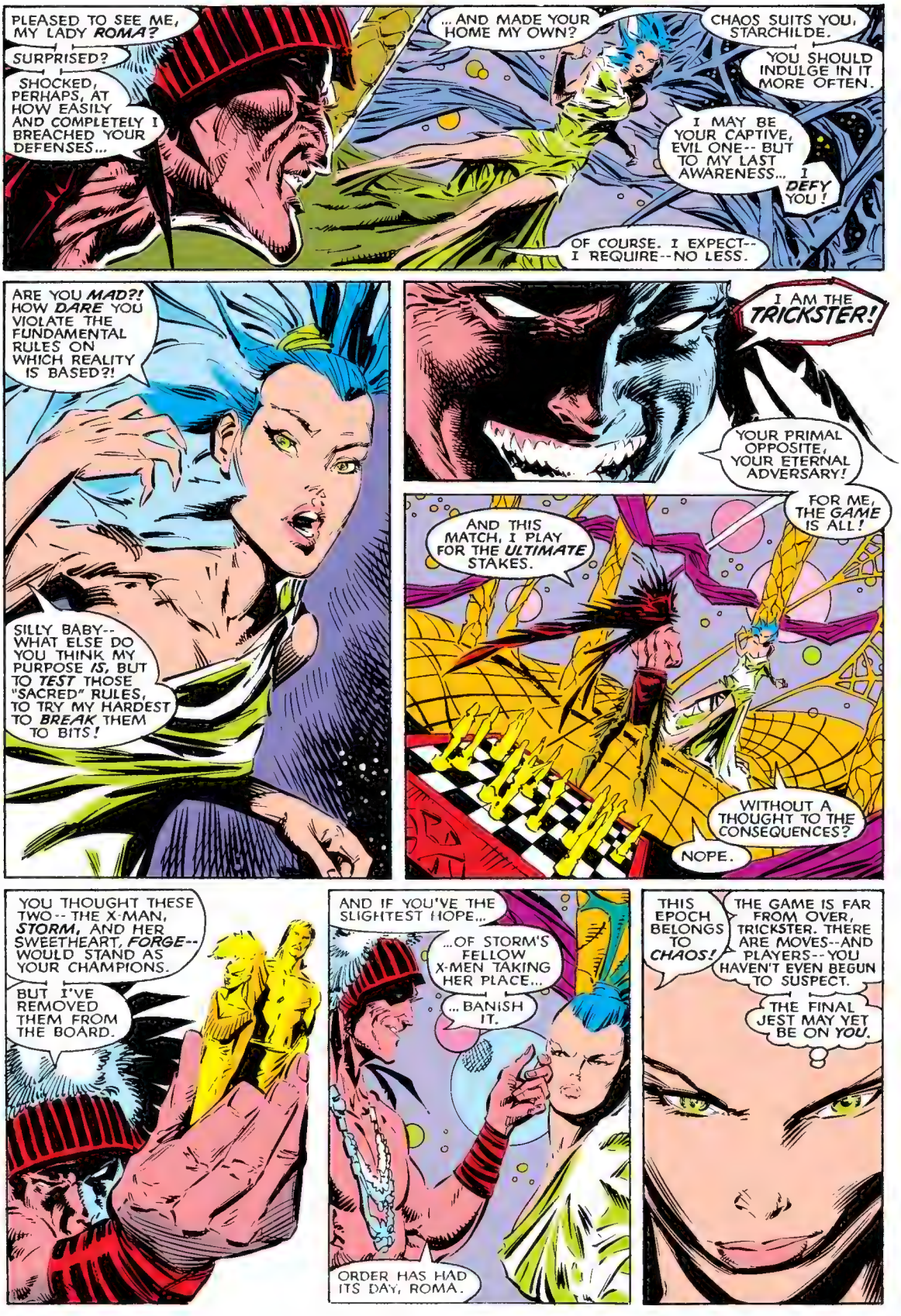
LET'S STAGE THE BATTLE!
I'LL PLAY JUGGERNAUT!
NO FAIR, GEORDIE, YOU'RE ALWAYS HIM!
WHAM, HE FLATTENS COPPERS!
POW, HE WRECKS A CAR!
SMASH, HE TOPPLES A WHOLE BUILDING!
NOBODY CAN STOP HIM!
ZAP!
DAZZLER GETS THE BRUTE...
...WITH HER LASER BLAST...
...RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES!
Urrrrgkgh--
-YA GOT ME, SWEETHEART!
HOORAH THE X-MEN!
THE GOOD GUYS WIN!!
IF ONLY THE ADULT WORLD HAD AS MUCH FAITH IN US AS THESE YOUNGSTERS.
YOU DRAW REAL GOOD, MISTER. YOU GONNA DRAW COMIC BOOKS, MAYBE?
PERHAPS. ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.
PARDON MY ASKING, BUT ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YOU'RE NA' SICK OR NOTHIN', ARE YOU, SIR-- 'CAUSE YOU'RE AWFUL PALE AN' SWEATY.
I WAS ILL, ACTUALLY. I ONLY RECENTLY WAS RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL.
Y'TALK FUNNY, ARE YUS AMERICAN?
DINNA BE DAFT, JAMIE DALGLIESH!
HE DOES NA' SOUND A BIT LIKE J.R. EWING OR MAX HEADROOM!
OCH, WHAT'S THE POINT O' WATCHIN' THE TELEVISION, IF YOU DINNA PAY ATTENTION?!
SCIENCE-FICTION BOOKSHOP
WHERE Y' FROM, THEN, SIR?
I LIVE MOSTLY IN AMERICA, BUT I AM RUSSIAN.
MY DAD'S BEEN TO RUSSIA.
YUIR DAD'S A COMMUNIST!
YUIR DAD VOTED FOR THATCHER!
BET HE'S A MUTANT, TOO!

I DINNA UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE X-MEN.
TEAM USED TO BE SO BOSS!
NOW THEY'RE ALL A BUNCH'A GIRLS!
THEY NEED MORE BOY MUTANTS.
THIS IS ONE. A MAINSTAY OF THE TEAM, WITH A BODY OF ORGANIC STEEL, AND STRENGTH TO MATCH.
HIS NAME IS COLOSSUS.
WOW!
UNFORTUNATELY, HE WAS SEVERELY INJURED IN A BATTLE WITH SOME EVIL MUTANTS CALLED THE MARAUDERS.
POOR LAD.
HOPE HE GETS BETTER.
HE'S NEAT!
Y'ASK ME--
-- THEM X-MEN IS WILLIES!
SEZ YOU!
TAKE THAT BACK, LEWIS!
X-FACTOR ARE REAL HEROES!
THEY'RE ORDINARY FOLKS, LIKE US!
THEY DINNA HAVE ANY FANCY POWERS.
BUT THEY FIGHT SUPER-VILLAINS JUST THE SAME!
ACCORDIN' TO THEM...
...MUTIES LIKE THE X-MEN ARE DANGEROUS!
BEST TO GET RID O' THE INHUMAN LOT BEFORE THEY TAKE OVER THE WORLD!
YOU WANT THE X-MEN, LEWIS...
...YOU'LL HAVE TO GET RID O' ME, FIRST!
EAT TEETH, SKUNGE!
STOP FIGHTING!
LISTEN TO ME, ALL OF YOU! MUTANTS ARE NOT INHUMAN MONSTERS!
LEWIS STARTED IT!
THEY ARE PEOPLE, WHO ARE BORN WITH EXTRAORDINARY ABILITIES. THAT'S ALL. SOME ARE GOOD, OTHERS BECOME CRIMINALS. BUT THEY, LIKE YOU, DESERVE TO BE JUDGED AS INDIVIDUALS, NOT WHOLEHEARTEDLY CONDEMNED AS A RACE, SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY EXIST.
THAT IS NOT FAIR. IT IS NOT RIGHT.
"PEOPLE" DIDN'T WRECK EDINBURGH LAST WINTER.
MUTIES DID!
YOU'VE NA' HEARD THE END O' THIS!
AN' YOU'LL BE SORRY YOU EVER STUCK UP FOR 'EM!


Sigh.
WIN SOME, LOSE OTHERS.
I WONDER WHICH THIS WAS.
WHAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU TRIED.
I SUPPOSE. I ALWAYS TRY.
I KNOW.
I AM PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH RASPUTIN.
AND I...
...WOULD LIKE TO COMMISSION A SKETCH. OF ME.
MY PLEASURE.
I KNOW THAT, TOO.
IN RETURN...
...I'LL READ YOUR PALM.
LET'S SEE-- THERE'S MUCH MORE TO YOU, MY FRIEND, THAN MEETS THE EYE.
A STRENGTH TO YOUR SOUL THAT COMPLEMENTS THE STRENGTH OF YOUR BODY.
PAIN OF HEART AND SPIRIT TO MATCH THE WOUNDS OF THE FLESH--
--LOVES LOST, HONOR FOUND, A REVERENCE FOR LIFE TEMPERED TWICE BY THE NECESSITY OF TAKING A LIFE...
MEXICO'S
HOPEY & MAGGOT
ORE 100th
WHO ARE YOU?!
HOW DOES SHE KNOW THESE THINGS?!
WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?!
A GIRL. A SUMMER EVENING. A SKETCH. A CONVERSATION BETWEEN FRIENDS.
COURAGE-- TESTED IN THE PAST, BUT NEVER MORE SO THAN IT'S ABOUT TO BE.
A CHOICE, AFTER WHICH NOTHING WILL BE THE SAME...
...AND ON WHICH THE FATE OF EVERYTHING DEPENDS.
ENOUGH! I AM TIRED OF YOUR GAMES, I WANT ANSWERS--
--BOSZHE MOI!
SHE HAS VANISHED!
AND WHERE SHE SAT--
...A STATUETTE, SOME SORT OF CHESS PIECE, OF ME...
...AS COLOSSUS!
BUT HOW COULD SHE POSSIBLY KNOW MY TRUE IDENTITY, OR SO MUCH ABOUT MY LIFE?! WAS SHE A MUTANT, TOO--
CHORT VOZMEE!?!
THE FACE I DREW--IT IS NOT HER FACE. AND YET... SOMEHOW...
...IT IS!
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?!
WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME?!?

THE BIG LOAF STILL THERE?
AYE, LEWIS.
FSSZ
THIS'LL TEACH HIM TO MESS WI' US!
GONNA MAKE A BIG BANG, LEWIS?
THE BEST!
WHUA--?!!
KA-POW!
NYET-- THE FIRECRACKER--
--CANNOT MAINTAIN MY CONCENTRATION--
--EXPLOSION STARTLED ME--
--I AM REVERTING TO MY ARMORED FORM!
LEWIS, D'YUS SEE?!
I KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHIN' ROTTEN ABOUT HIM!
WE WARNED YUS, Y' TWITS!
HE'S A MUTIE!
RUN F'R YUIR LIVES!!
DON'T--
--PLEASE--
--THERE IS NO NEED!
YOU THOUGHT COLOSSUS WAS NEAT, JAMIE.
THAT WAS A PITCHER.
IS THE REALITY SO FEARSOME?
I AM NOT A MONSTER.
HOW SMALL...
...AND HOLLOW...
...AND USELESS...
...MY WORDS SOUND--
--WHEN A SINGLE LOOK INTO THE BOY'S EYES IS ALL I NEED...
...TO SEE THAT A MONSTER--
...IS PRECISELY WHAT HE THINKS I AM.

AN IMPOSSIBLE PLACE--
-- SPACE THAT ENCOMPASSES ALL EXISTENCE--
--TIME THAT EMBRACES ALL ETERNITY--
--FROM HERE, YOU CAN TRULY SEE FOREVER.
LIKE ALL HOMES, THIS ONE REFLECTS THE CHARACTER OF THE DWELLER-- THERE'S WARMTH AND COMFORT...
...A CELEBRATION AND REVERENCE FOR LIFE THAT'S MATCHED ONLY BY AN INSATIABLE CURIOSITY ABOUT ITS SEEMINGLY INFINITE DIVERSITY.
SUDDENLY, THOUGH, WITHOUT WARNING--
--PEACE ENDS--
--TRANQUILITY IS SAVAGED, RAVAGED, TORN ASUNDER, CAST HELTER-SKELTER TO THE UNCARING WINDS OF FATE.
IN THE TWINKLING OF A STAR...
...ORDER SHATTERS INTO PRIMAL CHAOS.
AND, FROM THE HEART OF THAT MAELSTROM--
--INTO THIS HEART OF CREATION--
--COMES ITS MASTER.
ON EARTH, THIS FORM HE WEARS WAS KNOWN AS NAŽE, SHAMAN AND MEDICINE CHIEF OF THE CHEYENNE.
THAT OLD MAN WAS HIS LIFELONG FOE, AND HAS PAID THE ULTIMATE PRICE FOR THAT TRANSGRESSION.
NOW, THE UNIVERSE WILL FOLLOW SUIT.


PLEASED TO SEE ME, MY LADY ROMA?
SURPRISED?
SHOCKED, PERHAPS, AT HOW EASILY AND COMPLETELY I BREACHED YOUR DEFENSES...
...AND MADE YOUR HOME MY OWN?
CHAOS SUITS YOU, STARCHILDE.
YOU SHOULD INDULGE IN IT MORE OFTEN.
I MAY BE YOUR CAPTIVE, EVIL ONE-- BUT TO MY LAST AWARENESS... I DEFY YOU!
OF COURSE. I EXPECT-- I REQUIRE--NO LESS.
ARE YOU MAD?! HOW DARE YOU VIOLATE THE FUNDAMENTAL RULES ON WHICH REALITY IS BASED?!
SILLY BABY-- WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK MY PURPOSE IS, BUT TO TEST THOSE "SACRED" RULES, TO TRY MY HARDEST TO BREAK THEM TO BITS!
I AM THE TRICKSTER!
YOUR PRIMAL OPPOSITE, YOUR ETERNAL ADVERSARY!
AND THIS MATCH, I PLAY FOR THE ULTIMATE STAKES.
FOR ME, THE GAME IS ALL!
WITHOUT A THOUGHT TO THE CONSEQUENCES?
NOPE.
YOU THOUGHT THESE TWO-- THE X-MAN, STORM, AND HER SWEETHEART, FORGE-- WOULD STAND AS YOUR CHAMPIONS.
BUT I'VE REMOVED THEM FROM THE BOARD.
AND IF YOU'VE THE SLIGHTEST HOPE...
...OF STORM'S FELLOW X-MEN TAKING HER PLACE...
...BANISH IT.
ORDER HAS HAD ITS DAY, ROMA.
THIS EPOCH BELONGS TO CHAOS!
THE GAME IS FAR FROM OVER, TRICKSTER. THERE ARE MOVES--AND PLAYERS--YOU HAVEN'T EVEN BEGUN TO SUSPECT.
THE FINAL JEST MAY YET BE ON YOU.

SCOTLAND--

-- IN THE HIGHLANDS JUST NORTH OF EDINBURGH.

WANTED: THE X-MEN

BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS LEAGUE FOR CRIMES AGAINST THE RACE

JUGGERNAUT WAS HERE

IT WAS A SMALL, DERELICT PUB...

...THAT JUST HAPPENED TO BE IN THE JUGGERNAUT'S WAY.

ANYONE ELSE WOULD SIMPLY HAVE GONE AROUND.

WANTED: THE X-MEN

JUGGERNAUT WAS HERE

BUT THAT IS NOT CAIN MARKO'S STYLE.

HE CAUSED THIS DESTRUCTION--

--YET IT IS THE *X-MEN* WHO ARE BLAMED.

EVEN THOUGH THE TEAM RISKED THEIR LIVES TO STOP HIM!

IT IS NOT RIGHT!

IT IS NOT *FAIR!*

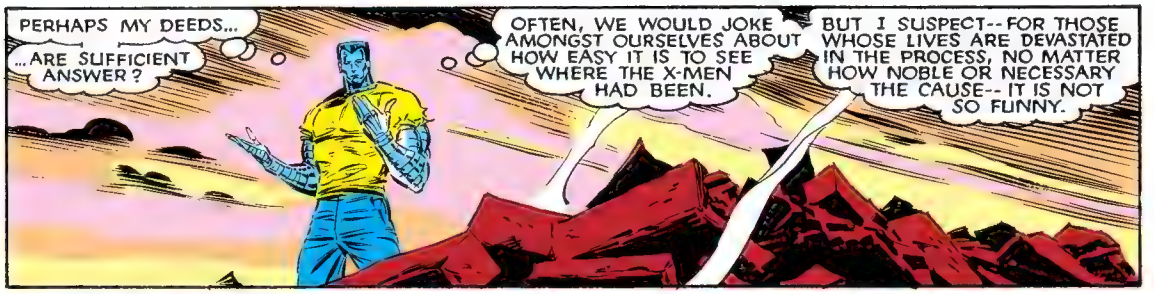
KRAKOW!

AFTER ALL THE GOOD WE HAVE DONE--

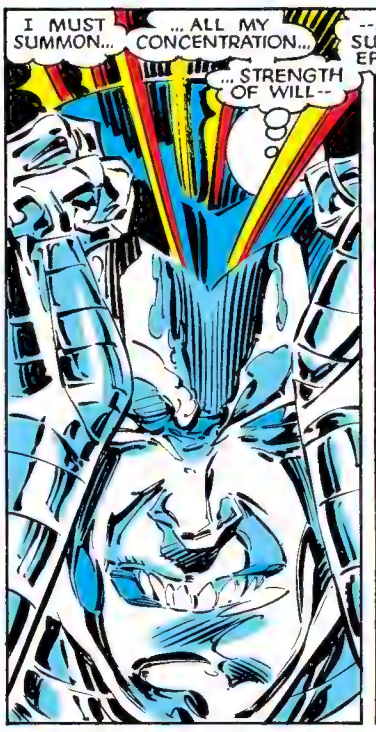
--AFTER ALL WE HAVE SACRIFICED--ALL WE HAVE SUFFERED--

--WHY DO PEOPLE STILL *HATE* US?!

WHY ARE WE SO FEARSOME?!!


PERHAPS MY DEEDS...
...ARE SUFFICIENT ANSWER?
OFTEN, WE WOULD JOKE AMONGST OURSELVES ABOUT HOW EASY IT IS TO SEE WHERE THE X-MEN HAD BEEN.
BUT I SUSPECT--FOR THOSE WHOSE LIVES ARE DEVASTATED IN THE PROCESS, NO MATTER HOW NOBLE OR NECESSARY THE CAUSE--IT IS NOT SO FUNNY.

I CANNOT RETURN HOME TO MUIR ISLE AS I AM.
I MUST CHANGE BACK TO HUMAN FORM.
SHTO--NOTHING IS HAPPENING!

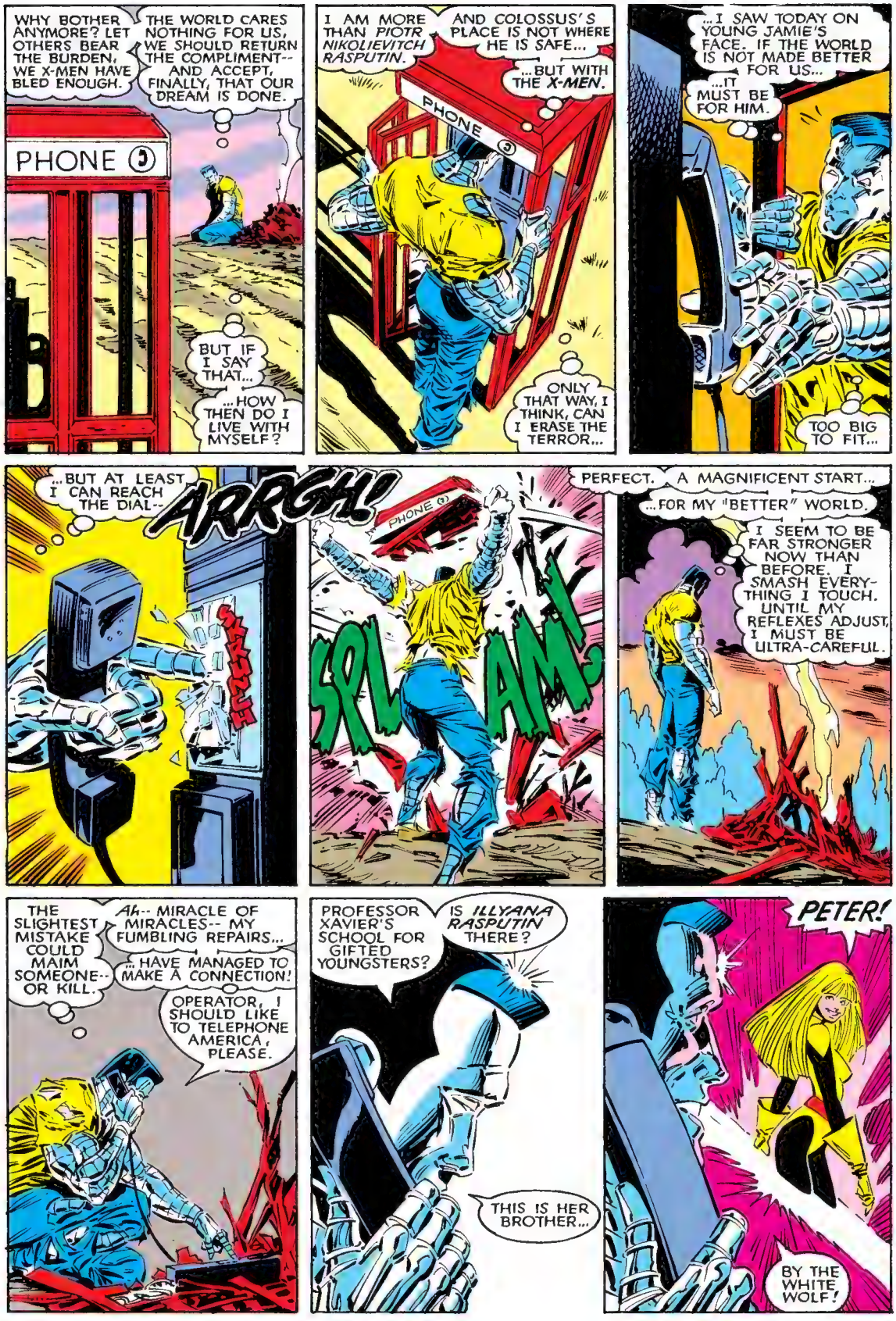

I MUST SUMMON...
...ALL MY CONCENTRATION...
...STRENGTH OF WILL--
--MAKE A SUPREME EFFORT--
--I CANNOT!

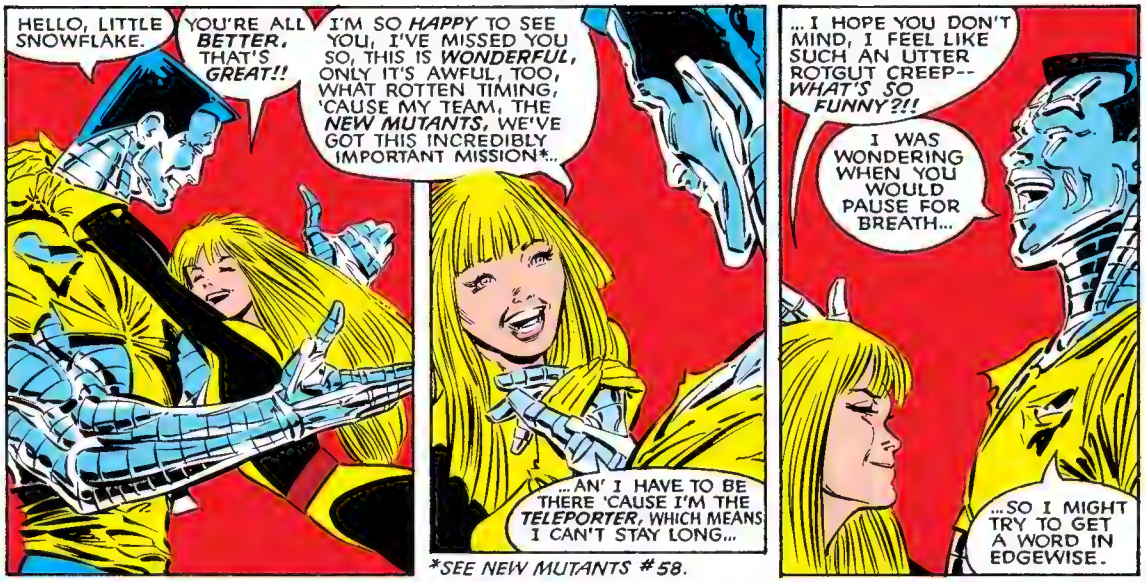
I CAN NO LONGER DENY WHAT HAS HAPPENED--SOMEHOW, AS I RECOVERED FROM MY WOUNDS, ARMOR BECAME MY BODY'S NATURAL STATE. I CAN ONLY TRANSFORM TO FLESH WITH THE GREATEST OF DIFFICULTY.
THIS COULD BE AWKWARD...
...SINCE I MUST CROSS SCOTLAND TO REACH MUIR ISLE.

I WONDER, THOUGH...
...IF THAT HAVEN IS WHERE MY STEPS SHOULD LEAD?
LIFE WAS SO SIMPLE WHEN I FIRST JOINED THE X-MEN.

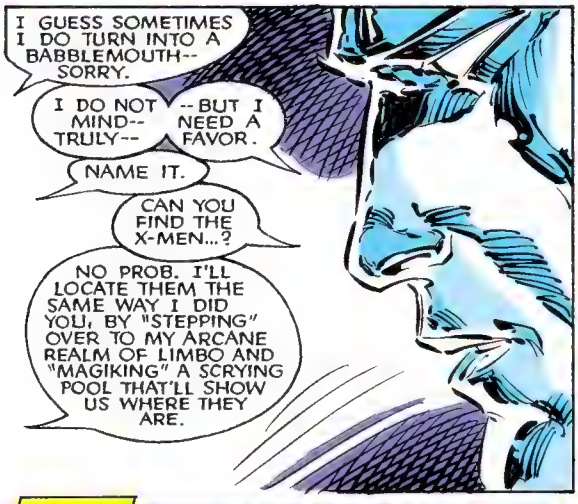
OUR MUTANT POWERS MADE US SPECIAL AND THAT, IN TURN, GAVE US A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT HUMANITY FROM THOSE WHO WOULD DO IT HARM. TO HELP BUILD A WORLD WHERE ALL THE EARTH'S CHILDREN WOULD LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE AND HARMONY.
WHEN DID THAT DREAM...
...BECOME A NIGHTMARE?

THE GOOD WE DID RARELY SEEMED TO MATTER.
ALL PEOPLE CARED ABOUT WERE THE THREAT MUTANTS WERE SUPPOSED TO REPRESENT.
EVEN OTHER GROUPS OF "SUPER HEROES" LOOKED ON US WITH DISTRUST.


WHY BOTHER ANYMORE? LET OTHERS BEAR THE BURDEN. WE X-MEN HAVE BLED ENOUGH.
THE WORLD CARES NOTHING FOR US, WE SHOULD RETURN THE COMPLIMENT-- AND ACCEPT, FINALLY, THAT OUR DREAM IS DONE.
PHONE
BUT IF I SAY THAT...
...HOW THEN DO I LIVE WITH MYSELF?
I AM MORE THAN PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH RASPUTIN.
AND COLOSSUS'S PLACE IS NOT WHERE HE IS SAFE...
...BUT WITH THE X-MEN.
PHONE
ONLY THAT WAY, I THINK, CAN I ERASE THE TERROR...
...I SAW TODAY ON YOUNG JAMIE'S FACE. IF THE WORLD IS NOT MADE BETTER FOR US...
...IT MUST BE FOR HIM.
TOO BIG TO FIT...
...BUT AT LEAST I CAN REACH THE DIAL--
ARRGH!
SKRUUUH
PHONE
SRL AM!
PERFECT. A MAGNIFICENT START...
...FOR MY "BETTER" WORLD.
I SEEM TO BE FAR STRONGER NOW THAN BEFORE. I SMASH EVERYTHING I TOUCH. UNTIL MY REFLEXES ADJUST, I MUST BE ULTRA-CAREFUL.
THE SLIGHTEST MISTAKE COULD MAIM SOMEONE-- OR KILL.
Ah-- MIRACLE OF MIRACLES-- MY FUMBLING REPAIRS...
...HAVE MANAGED TO MAKE A CONNECTION!
OPERATOR, I SHOULD LIKE TO TELEPHONE AMERICA, PLEASE.
PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS?
IS ILLYANA RASPUTIN THERE?
THIS IS HER BROTHER...
PETER!
BY THE WHITE WOLF!

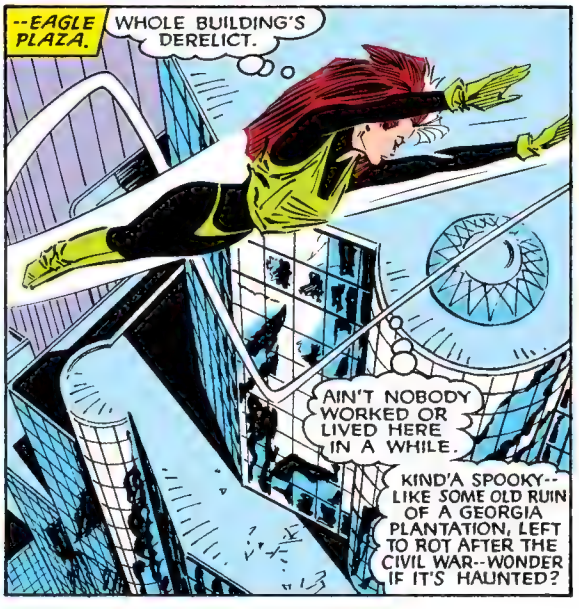

HELLO, LITTLE SNOWFLAKE.
YOU'RE ALL BETTER, THAT'S GREAT!!
I'M SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU, I'VE MISSED YOU SO, THIS IS WONDERFUL, ONLY IT'S AWFUL, TOO, WHAT ROTTEN TIMING, 'CAUSE MY TEAM, THE NEW MUTANTS, WE'VE GOT THIS INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT MISSION*...
...AN' I HAVE TO BE THERE 'CAUSE I'M THE TELEPORTER, WHICH MEANS I CAN'T STAY LONG...
...I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND, I FEEL LIKE SUCH AN UTTER ROTGUT CREEP-- WHAT'S SO FUNNY?!!
I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOU WOULD PAUSE FOR BREATH...
...SO I MIGHT TRY TO GET A WORD IN EDGEWISE.

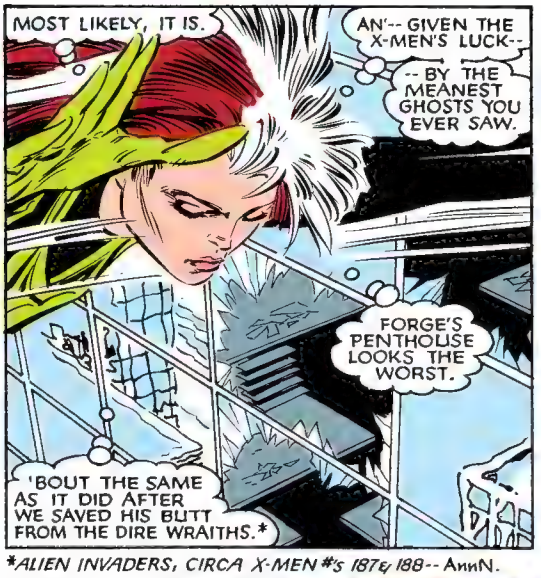
*SEE NEW MUTANTS #58.


I GUESS SOMETIMES I DO TURN INTO A BABBLEMOUTH-- SORRY.
I DO NOT MIND-- TRULY--
--BUT I NEED A FAVOR.
NAME IT.
CAN YOU FIND THE X-MEN...?
NO PROB. I'LL LOCATE THEM THE SAME WAY I DID YOU, BY "STEPPING" OVER TO MY ARCANE REALM OF LIMBO AND "MAGIKING" A SCRYING POOL THAT'LL SHOW US WHERE THEY ARE.

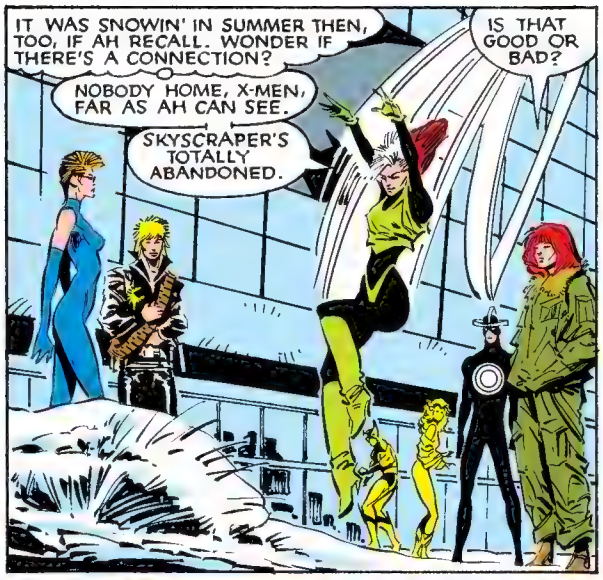
THEN, CAN YOU TELEPORT ME TO THEM? THIS IS AS IMPORTANT TO ME IN ITS WAY AS YOUR MISSION.
SNAP!
I'LL HAVE YOU THERE BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.
SPACEEBA.
HEY, WHAT ARE SISTERS FOR?

DALLAS.
STAR CITY OF THE SUN BELT.
AND, DOMINATING THE DOWNTOWN SKYLINE--SYMBOLIZING THESE HARD TIMES AS IT SO RECENTLY DID THE BOOM THAT CAME BEFORE--

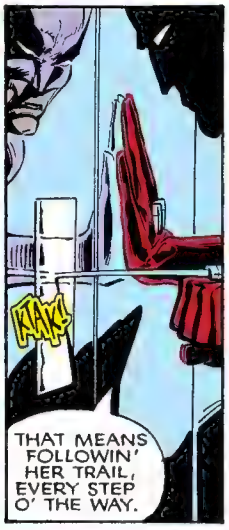

--EAGLE PLAZA.
WHOLE BUILDING'S DERELICT.
AIN'T NOBODY WORKED OR LIVED HERE IN A WHILE.
KIND'A SPOOKY-- LIKE SOME OLD RUIN OF A GEORGIA PLANTATION, LEFT TO ROT AFTER THE CIVIL WAR--WONDER IF IT'S HAUNTED?

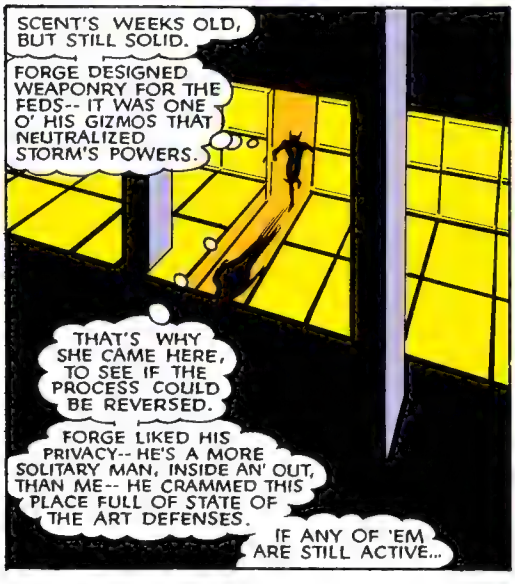

MOST LIKELY, IT IS.
AN'-- GIVEN THE X-MEN'S LUCK--
-- BY THE MEANEST GHOSTS YOU EVER SAW.
FORGE'S PENTHOUSE LOOKS THE WORST.
'BOUT THE SAME AS IT DID AFTER WE SAVED HIS BUTT FROM THE DIRE WRAITHS.*

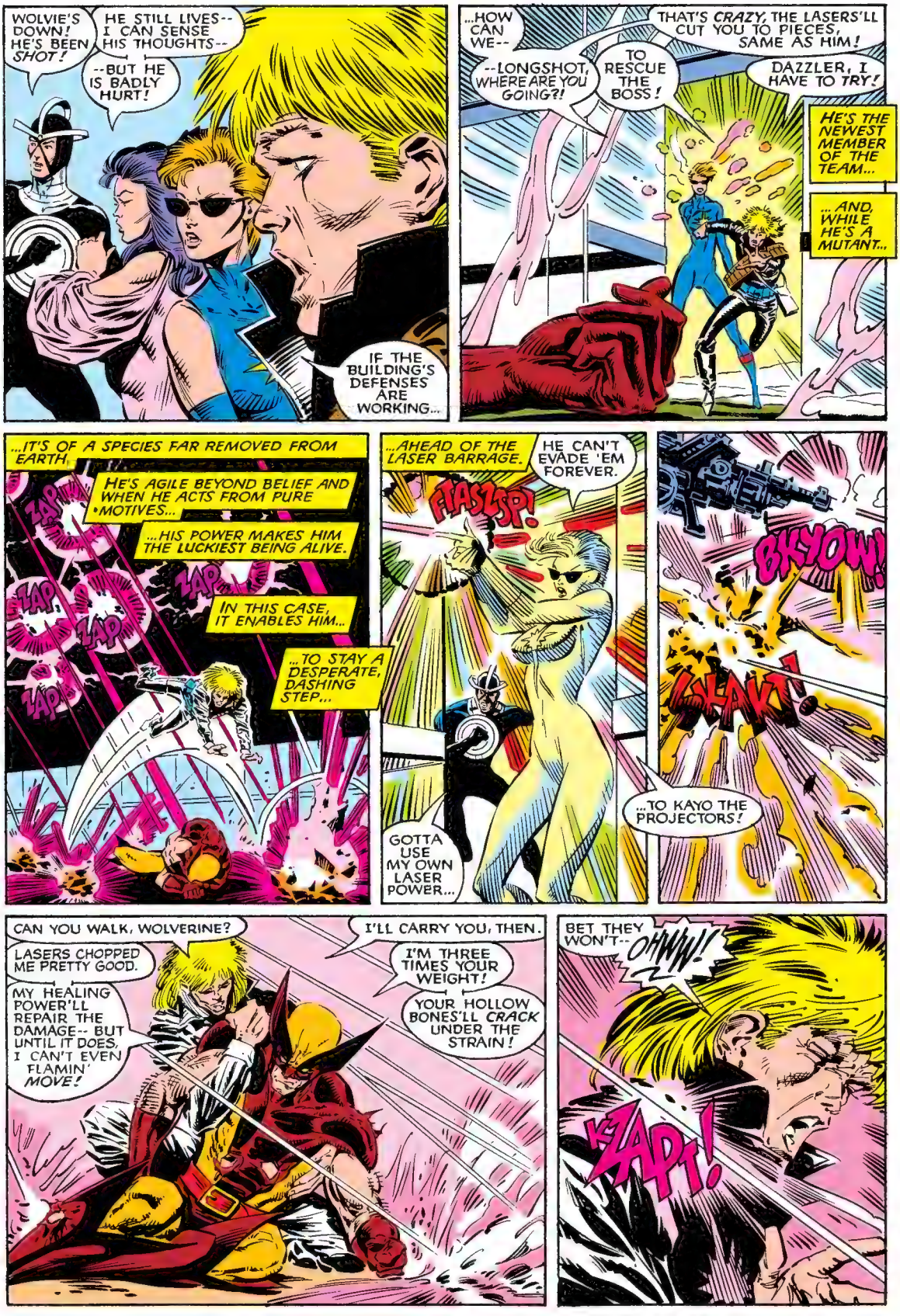
*ALIEN INVADERS, CIRCA X-MEN #'s 187 & 188-- AnnN.

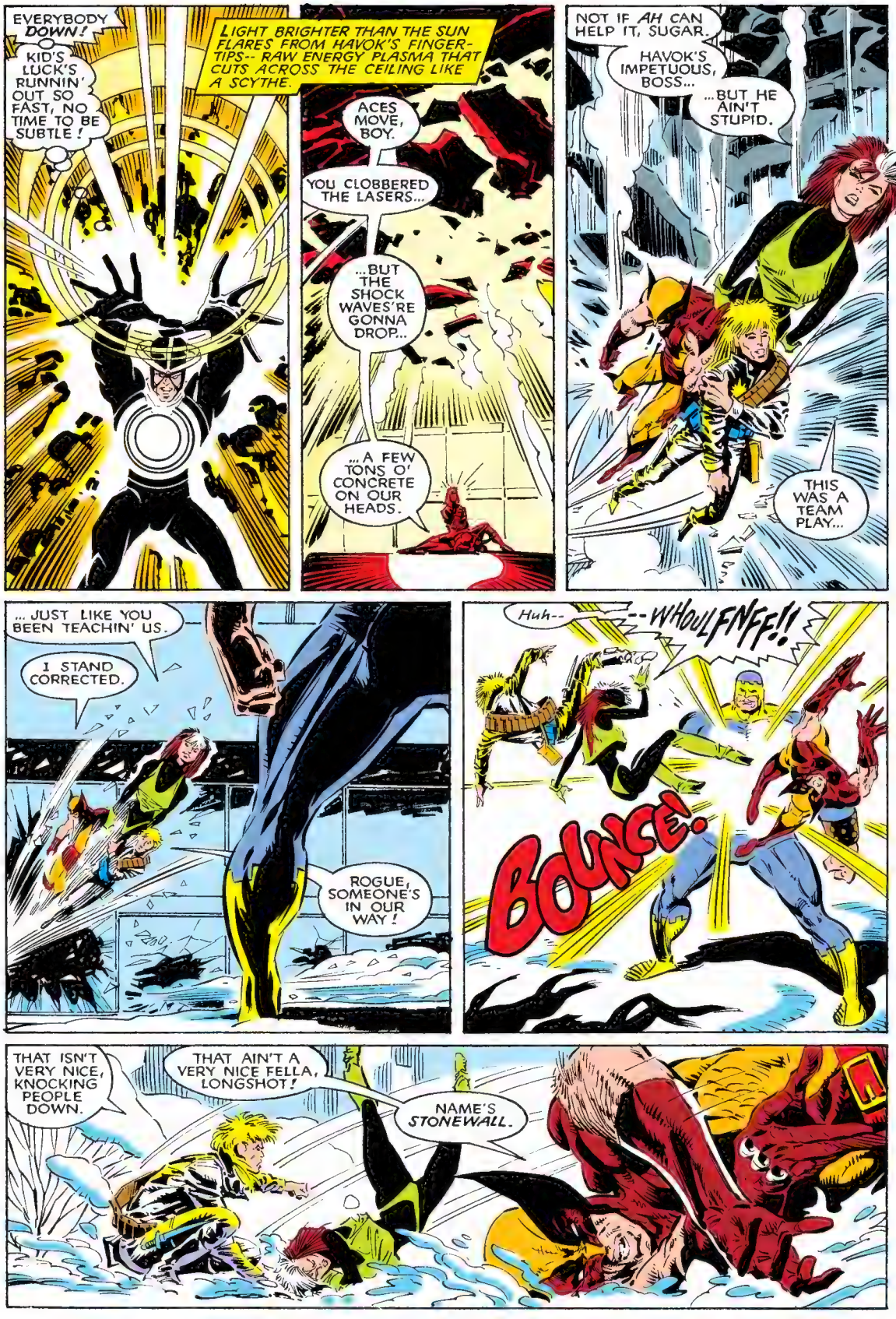

IT WAS SNOWIN' IN SUMMER THEN, TOO, IF AH RECALL. WONDER IF THERE'S A CONNECTION?
IS THAT GOOD OR BAD?
NOBODY HOME, X-MEN, FAR AS AH CAN SEE.
SKYSCRAPER'S TOTALLY ABANDONED.

SIXTY-FOUR DOLLAR QUESTION, Ms. PRYOR.
SEEMS A WASTE TO GO IN THE FRONT DOOR, WOLVERINE, WHEN THE ROOF'S WIDE OPEN.
HOW 'BOUT AH FLY EVERYBODY UP TOP?

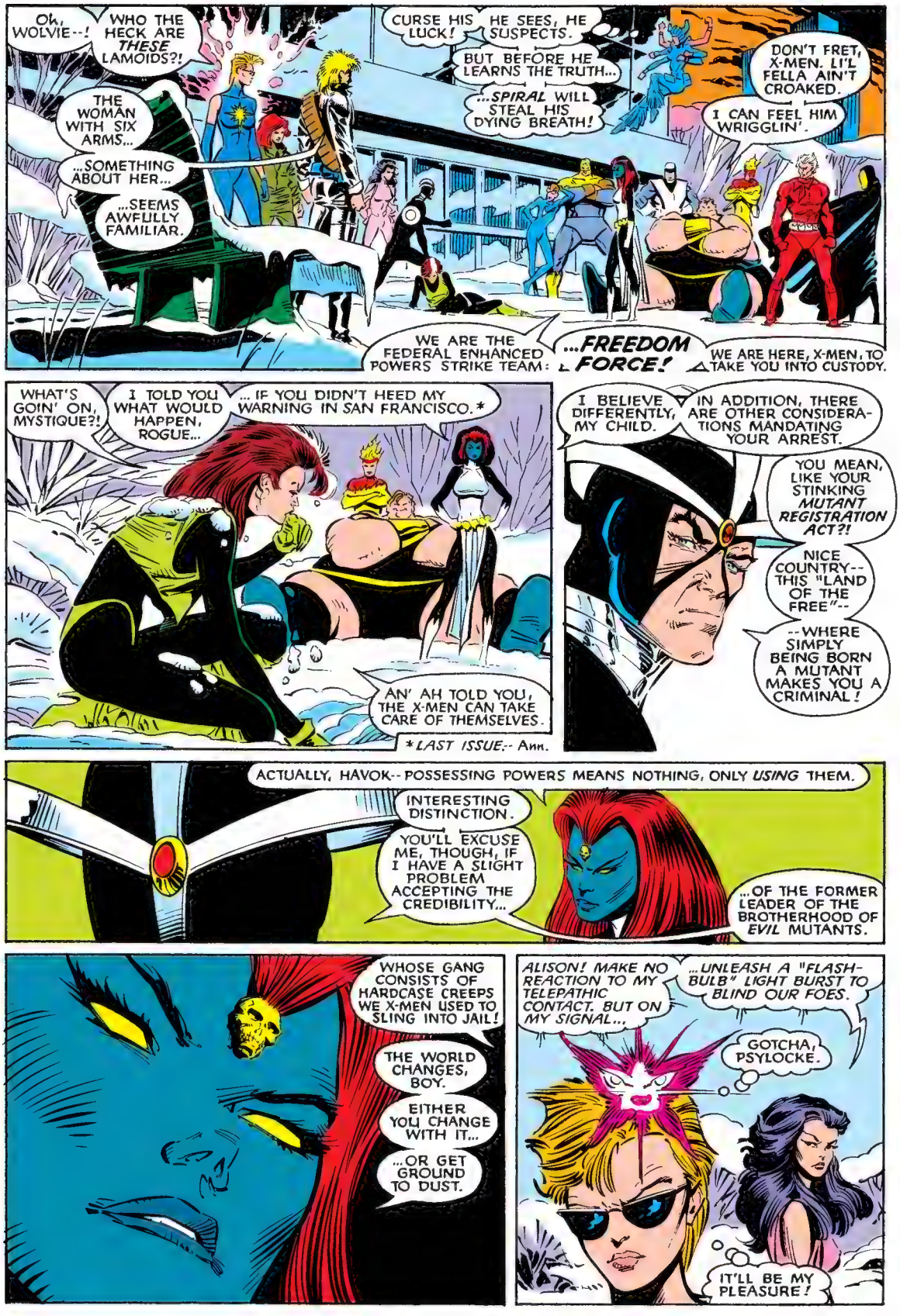


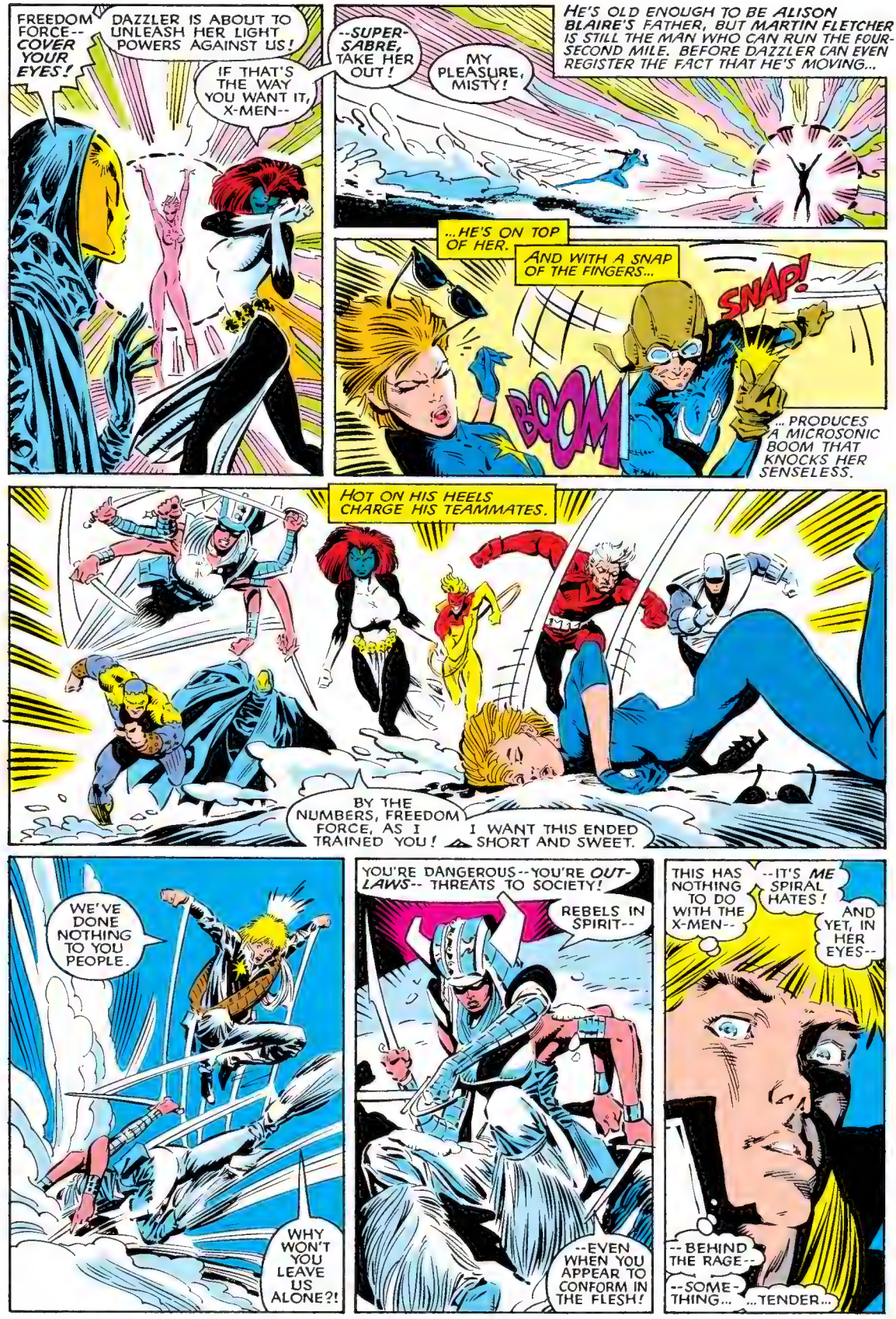

SCENT'S WEEKS OLD, BUT STILL SOLID.
FORGE DESIGNED WEAPONRY FOR THE FEDS-- IT WAS ONE O' HIS GIZMOS THAT NEUTRALIZED STORM'S POWERS.
THAT'S WHY SHE CAME HERE, TO SEE IF THE PROCESS COULD BE REVERSED.
FORGE LIKED HIS PRIVACY-- HE'S A MORE SOLITARY MAN, INSIDE AN' OUT, THAN ME-- HE CRAMMED THIS PLACE FULL OF STATE OF THE ART DEFENSES.
IF ANY OF 'EM ARE STILL ACTIVE...

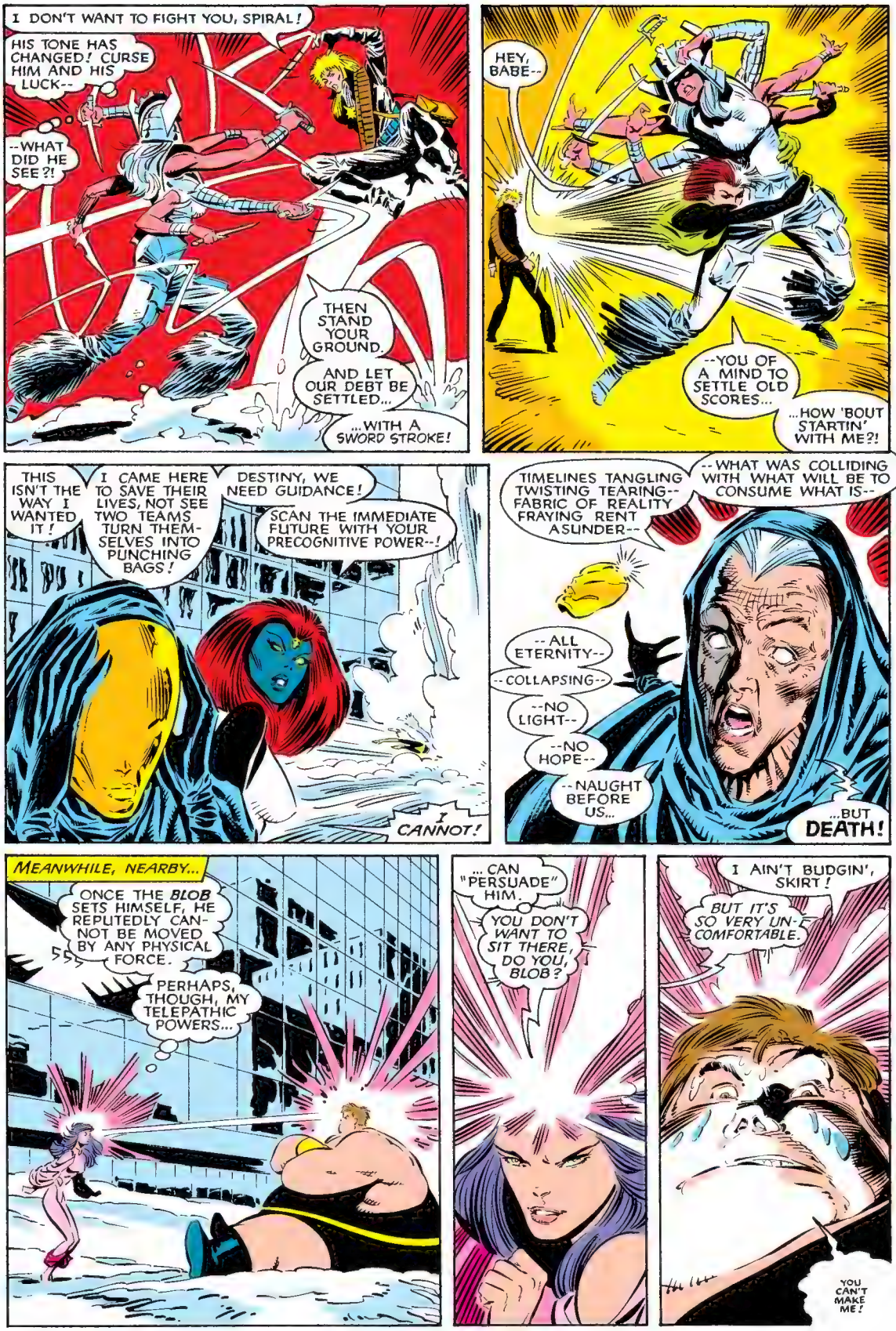

WOLVIE'S DOWN! HE'S BEEN SHOT!
HE STILL LIVES-- I CAN SENSE HIS THOUGHTS--
--BUT HE IS BADLY HURT!
IF THE BUILDING'S DEFENSES ARE WORKING...
...HOW CAN WE--
--LONGSHOT, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
TO RESCUE THE BOSS!
THAT'S CRAZY, THE LASERS'LL CUT YOU TO PIECES, SAME AS HIM!
DAZZLER, I HAVE TO TRY!
HE'S THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE TEAM...
... AND, WHILE HE'S A MUTANT...
...IT'S OF A SPECIES FAR REMOVED FROM EARTH.
HE'S AGILE BEYOND BELIEF AND WHEN HE ACTS FROM PURE •MOTIVES...
...HIS POWER MAKES HIM THE LUCKIEST BEING ALIVE.
IN THIS CASE, IT ENABLES HIM...
...TO STAY A DESPERATE, DASHING STEP...
ZAP!
ZAP!
ZAP!
ZAP!
ZAP!
...AHEAD OF THE LASER BARRAGE.
HE CAN'T EVADE 'EM FOREVER.
FTASZSP!
GOTTA USE MY OWN LASER POWER...
BKYOW!
SKAK!
...TO KAYO THE PROJECTORS!
CAN YOU WALK, WOLVERINE?
LASERS CHOPPED ME PRETTY GOOD.
MY HEALING POWER'LL REPAIR THE DAMAGE-- BUT UNTIL IT DOES, I CAN'T EVEN FLAMIN' MOVE!
I'LL CARRY YOU, THEN.
I'M THREE TIMES YOUR WEIGHT!
YOUR HOLLOW BONES'LL CRACK UNDER THE STRAIN!
BET THEY WON'T--
OHWW!
KZAPT!

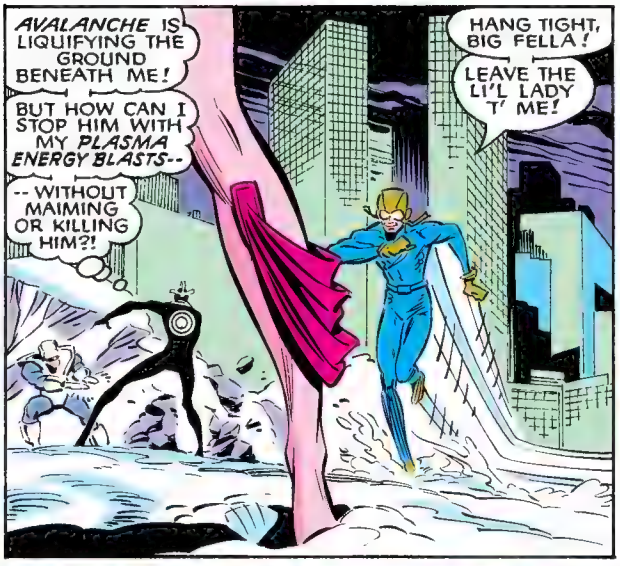

EVERYBODY DOWN!
KID'S LUCK'S RUNNIN' OUT SO FAST, NO TIME TO BE SUBTLE!
LIGHT BRIGHTER THAN THE SUN FLARES FROM HAVOK'S FINGER-TIPS-- RAW ENERGY PLASMA THAT CUTS ACROSS THE CEILING LIKE A SCYTHE.
ACES MOVE, BOY.
YOU CLOBBERED THE LASERS...
...BUT THE SHOCK WAVES'RE GONNA DROP...
...A FEW TONS O' CONCRETE ON OUR HEADS.
NOT IF AH CAN HELP IT, SUGAR.
HAVOK'S IMPETUOUS, BOSS...
...BUT HE AIN'T STUPID.
THIS WAS A TEAM PLAY...
...JUST LIKE YOU BEEN TEACHIN' US.
I STAND CORRECTED.
ROGUE, SOMEONE'S IN OUR WAY!
Huh--
--WHOUFNFF!!
BOUNCE!
THAT ISN'T VERY NICE, KNOCKING PEOPLE DOWN.
THAT AIN'T A VERY NICE FELLA, LONGSHOT!
NAME'S STONEWALL.

AN' HE AIN'T HERE ALL BY HIS LONESOME, X-CHUMPS!
YOU IN BIG TROUBLE NOW!
THE PLAZA, SWEEPING TOWARDS US LIKE A WAVE!
AVALANCHE'S DOING!
GOLD STAR FOR YOU, SWEETCAKES!
AND RIDING THE CREST--
--BLOB!
ANOTHER FOR YOU, HAVOK, FOR REMEMBERIN' MY NAME!
WATCH CLOSELY, YA BUMS, YOU'LL LEARN SOMETHIN'!
TOSS ME HIGH, AVALANCHE--
--AN' WE'LL SEE IF THE SHORTY PSYCHO'S BONES--
--REALLY ARE UNBREAKABLE!
GERONIMO!


Oh, WOLVIE--!
WHO THE HECK ARE THESE LAMOIDS?!
THE WOMAN WITH SIX ARMS...
...SOMETHING ABOUT HER...
...SEEMS AWFULLY FAMILIAR.
CURSE HIS LUCK!
HE SEES, HE SUSPECTS.
BUT BEFORE HE LEARNS THE TRUTH...
...SPIRAL WILL STEAL HIS DYING BREATH!
DON'T FRET, X-MEN. LI'L FELLA AIN'T CROAKED.
I CAN FEEL HIM WRIGGLIN'.
WE ARE THE FEDERAL ENHANCED POWERS STRIKE TEAM:
...FREEDOM FORCE!
WE ARE HERE, X-MEN, TO TAKE YOU INTO CUSTODY.
WHAT'S GOIN' ON, MYSTIQUE?!
I TOLD YOU WHAT WOULD HAPPEN, ROGUE...
...IF YOU DIDN'T HEED MY WARNING IN SAN FRANCISCO.*
AN' AH TOLD YOU, THE X-MEN CAN TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.
*LAST ISSUE:-- Ann.
I BELIEVE DIFFERENTLY, MY CHILD.
IN ADDITION, THERE ARE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS MANDATING YOUR ARREST.
YOU MEAN, LIKE YOUR STINKING MUTANT REGISTRATION ACT?!
NICE COUNTRY-- THIS "LAND OF THE FREE"--
--WHERE SIMPLY BEING BORN A MUTANT MAKES YOU A CRIMINAL!
ACTUALLY, HAVOK-- POSSESSING POWERS MEANS NOTHING, ONLY USING THEM.
INTERESTING DISTINCTION.
YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, THOUGH, IF I HAVE A SLIGHT PROBLEM ACCEPTING THE CREDIBILITY...
...OF THE FORMER LEADER OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS.
WHOSE GANG CONSISTS OF HARDCASE CREEPS WE X-MEN USED TO SLING INTO JAIL!
THE WORLD CHANGES, BOY.
EITHER YOU CHANGE WITH IT...
...OR GET GROUND TO DUST.
ALISON! MAKE NO REACTION TO MY TELEPATHIC CONTACT. BUT ON MY SIGNAL...
...UNLEASH A "FLASH-BULB" LIGHT BURST TO BLIND OUR FOES.
GOTCHA, PSYLOCKE.
IT'LL BE MY PLEASURE!


FREEDOM FORCE-- COVER YOUR EYES!
DAZZLER IS ABOUT TO UNLEASH HER LIGHT POWERS AGAINST US!
IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT, X-MEN--
--SUPER-SABRE, TAKE HER OUT!
MY PLEASURE, MISTY!
HE'S OLD ENOUGH TO BE ALISON BLAIRE'S FATHER, BUT MARTIN FLETCHER IS STILL THE MAN WHO CAN RUN THE FOUR-SECOND MILE. BEFORE DAZZLER CAN EVEN REGISTER THE FACT THAT HE'S MOVING...
...HE'S ON TOP OF HER.
AND WITH A SNAP OF THE FINGERS...
SNAP!
BOOM
... PRODUCES A MICROSONIC BOOM THAT KNOCKS HER SENSELESS.
HOT ON HIS HEELS CHARGE HIS TEAMMATES.
BY THE NUMBERS, FREEDOM FORCE, AS I TRAINED YOU!
I WANT THIS ENDED SHORT AND SWEET.
WE'VE DONE NOTHING TO YOU PEOPLE.
WHY WON'T YOU LEAVE US ALONE?!
YOU'RE DANGEROUS--YOU'RE OUTLAWS-- THREATS TO SOCIETY!
REBELS IN SPIRIT--
--EVEN WHEN YOU APPEAR TO CONFORM IN THE FLESH!
THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE X-MEN--
--IT'S ME SPIRAL HATES!
AND YET, IN HER EYES--
-- BEHIND THE RAGE--
--SOME-THING...
...TENDER...

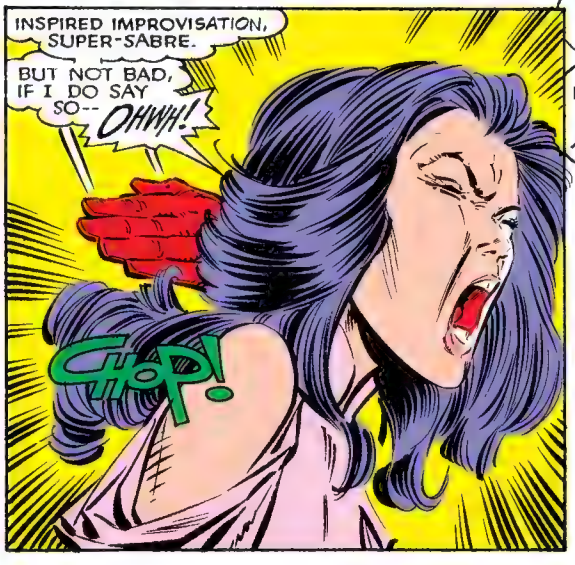

I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU, SPIRAL!
HIS TONE HAS CHANGED! CURSE HIM AND HIS LUCK--
--WHAT DID HE SEE?!
THEN STAND YOUR GROUND.
AND LET OUR DEBT BE SETTLED...
...WITH A SWORD STROKE!
HEY, BABE--
--YOU OF A MIND TO SETTLE OLD SCORES...
...HOW 'BOUT STARTIN' WITH ME?!
THIS ISN'T THE WAY I WANTED IT!
I CAME HERE TO SAVE THEIR LIVES, NOT SEE TWO TEAMS TURN THEMSELVES INTO PUNCHING BAGS!
DESTINY, WE NEED GUIDANCE!
SCAN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE WITH YOUR PRECOGNITIVE POWER--!
I CANNOT!
TIMELINES TANGLING TWISTING TEARING-- FABRIC OF REALITY FRAYING RENT ASUNDER--
--WHAT WAS COLLIDING WITH WHAT WILL BE TO CONSUME WHAT IS--
--ALL ETERNITY--
--COLLAPSING--
--NO LIGHT--
--NO HOPE--
--NAUGHT BEFORE US...
...BUT DEATH!
MEANWHILE, NEARBY...
ONCE THE BLOB SETS HIMSELF, HE REPUTEDLY CANNOT BE MOVED BY ANY PHYSICAL FORCE.
PERHAPS, THOUGH, MY TELEPATHIC POWERS...
...CAN "PERSUADE" HIM.
YOU DON'T WANT TO SIT THERE, DO YOU, BLOB?
I AIN'T BUDGIN', SKIRT!
BUT IT'S SO VERY UN-E COMFORTABLE.
YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!

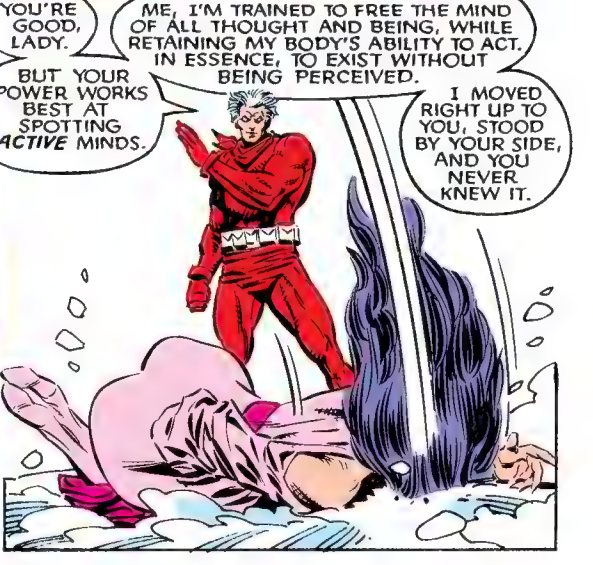

AVALANCHE IS LIQUIFYING THE GROUND BENEATH ME!
BUT HOW CAN I STOP HIM WITH MY PLASMA ENERGY BLASTS--
-- WITHOUT MAIMING OR KILLING HIM?!
HANG TIGHT, BIG FELLA!
LEAVE THE LI'L LADY T' ME!

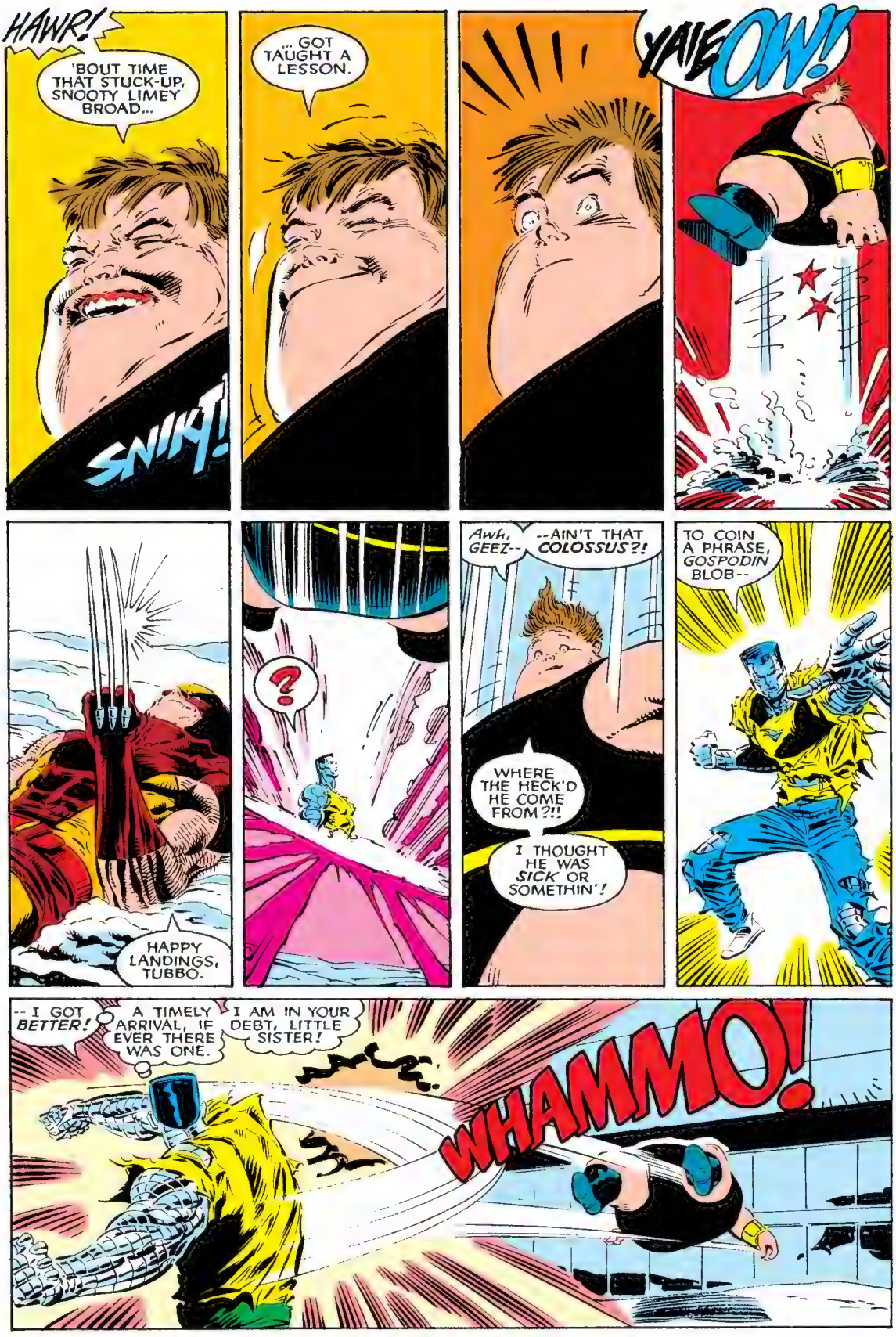
Huh?!?
SHE' WAS RIGHT IN FRONT O' ME, HOW'D I MISS HER?!
SIMPLE. I WAS NEVER REALLY THERE.
WHAT YOU SAW WAS A TELEPATHIC ILLUSION.

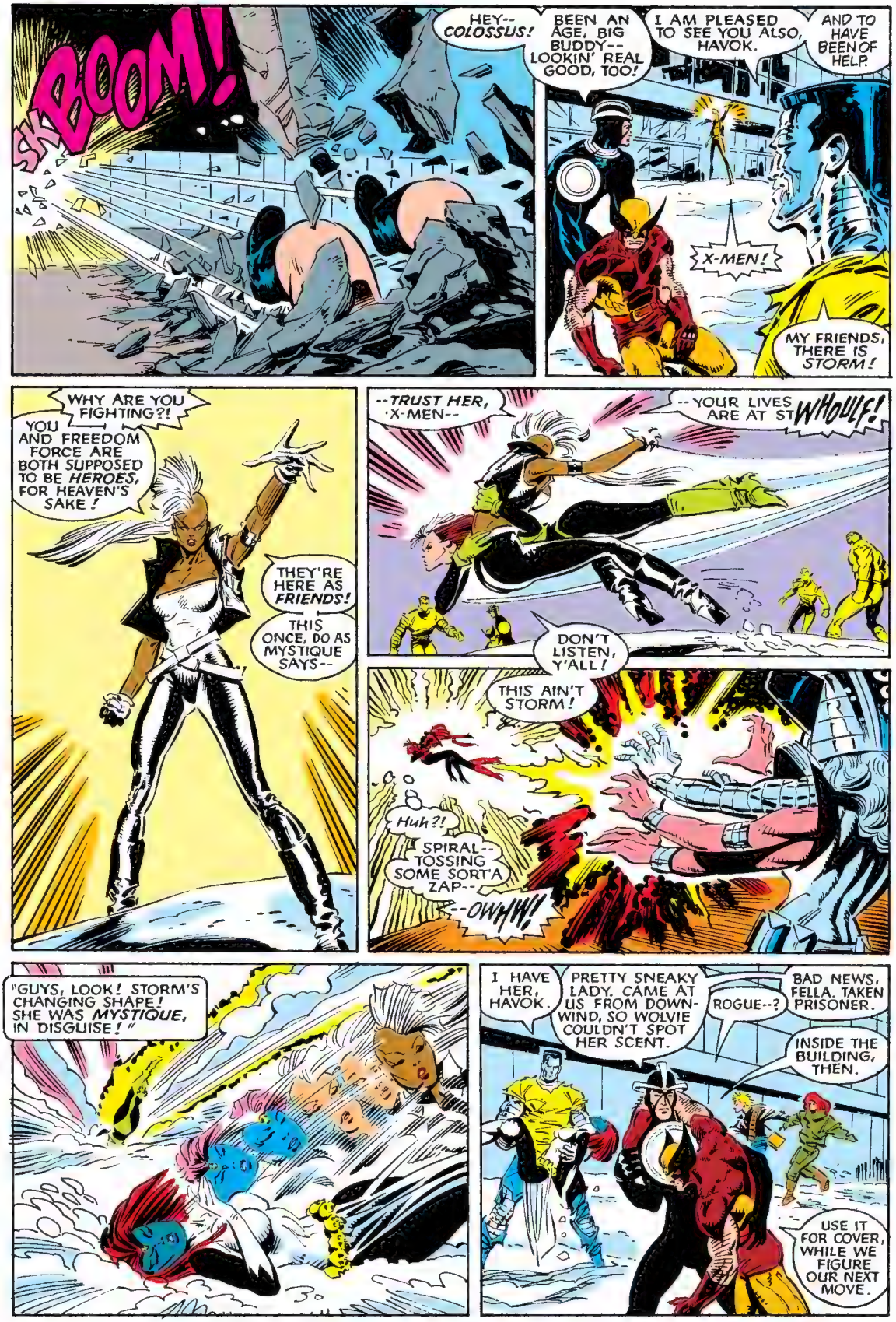
?!!
THE BLOB--
--GONNA HIT--
--WHUMPGHF!
RICOCHETIN' T'WARDS STONEY--

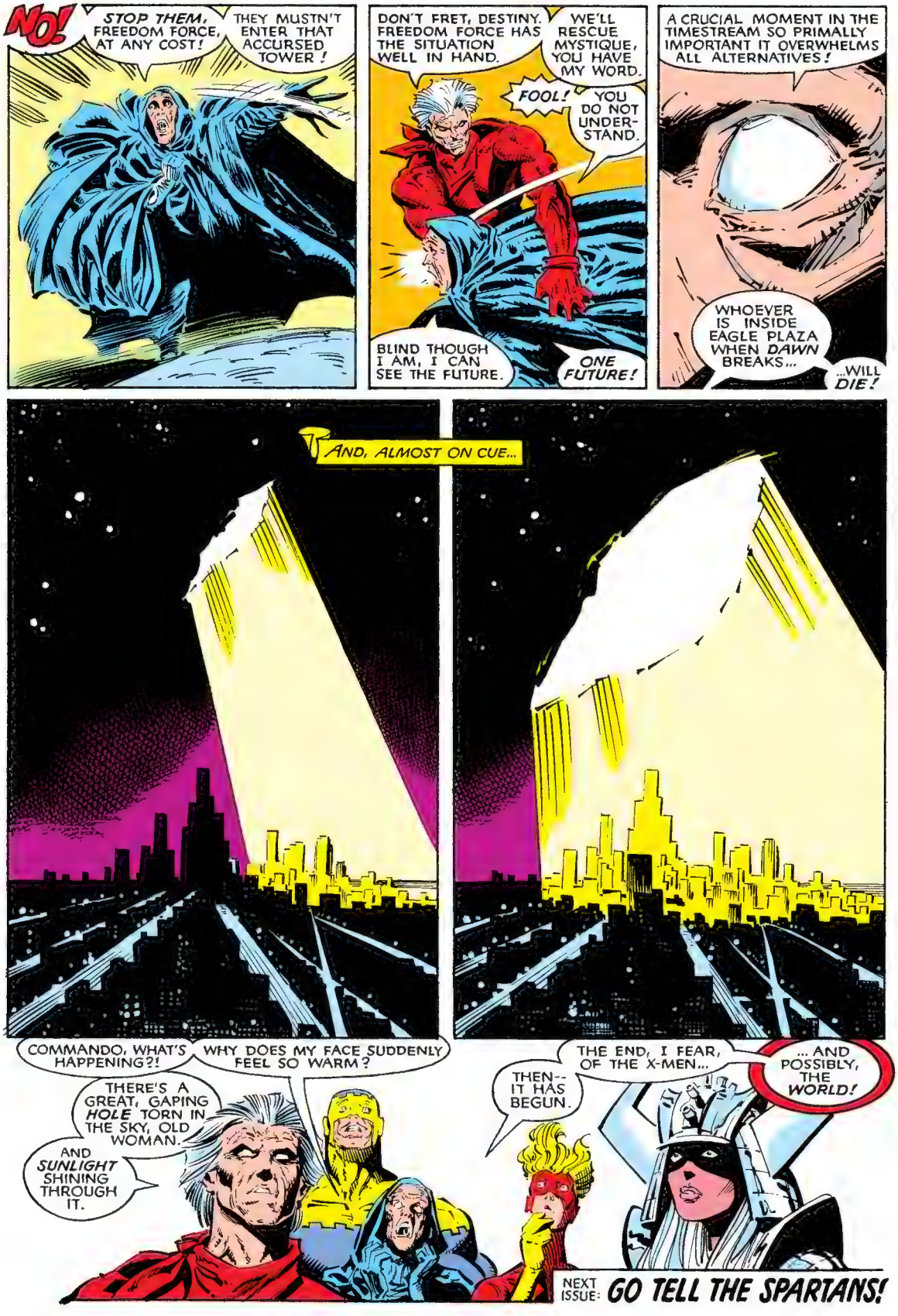
--NO WAY, NO TIME--
--TO CHOP MOMENTUM, CHANGE DIRECTION--
--BOUNCIN' OFF STONEY--
--TO AVALANCHE--
SLAM!
--STINKIN' PSI-WITCH--
--MUST'A PLANNED THINGS--
--THIS WAY!


INSPIRED IMPROVISATION, SUPER-SABRE.
BUT NOT BAD, IF I DO SAY SO--
OHWH!
CHOP!


YOU'RE GOOD, LADY.
BUT YOUR POWER WORKS BEST AT SPOTTING ACTIVE MINDS.
ME, I'M TRAINED TO FREE THE MIND OF ALL THOUGHT AND BEING, WHILE RETAINING MY BODY'S ABILITY TO ACT. IN ESSENCE, TO EXIST WITHOUT BEING PERCEIVED.
I MOVED RIGHT UP TO YOU, STOOD BY YOUR SIDE, AND YOU NEVER KNEW IT.


HAWR!
'BOUT TIME THAT STUCK-UP, SNOOTY LIMEY BROAD...
SNIKT!
...GOT TAUGHT A LESSON.
YAIEOW!
HAPPY LANDINGS, TUBBO.
?
Awh, GEEZ--
--AIN'T THAT COLOSSUS?!
WHERE THE HECK'D HE COME FROM?!!
I THOUGHT HE WAS SICK OR SOMETHIN'!
TO COIN A PHRASE, GOSPODIN BLOB--
-- I GOT BETTER!
A TIMELY ARRIVAL, IF EVER THERE WAS ONE.
I AM IN YOUR DEBT, LITTLE SISTER!
WHAMMO!


SK BOOM!
HEY-- COLOSSUS!
BEEN AN AGE, BIG BUDDY-- LOOKIN' REAL GOOD, TOO!
I AM PLEASED TO SEE YOU ALSO, HAVOK.
AND TO HAVE BEEN OF HELP.
X-MEN!
MY FRIENDS, THERE IS STORM!
WHY ARE YOU FIGHTING?! YOU AND FREEDOM FORCE ARE BOTH SUPPOSED TO BE HEROES, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE!
THEY'RE HERE AS FRIENDS!
THIS ONCE, DO AS MYSTIQUE SAYS--
--TRUST HER, 'X-MEN--
--YOUR LIVES ARE AT STWHOULF!
DON'T LISTEN, Y'ALL!
THIS AIN'T STORM!
Huh?!
SPIRAL-- TOSSING SOME SORT'A ZAP--
-OWHW!
"GUYS, LOOK! STORM'S CHANGING SHAPE! SHE WAS MYSTIQUE, IN DISGUISE!"
I HAVE HER, HAVOK.
PRETTY SNEAKY LADY. CAME AT US FROM DOWN-WIND, SO WOLVIE COULDN'T SPOT HER SCENT.
ROGUE--?
BAD NEWS, FELLA. TAKEN PRISONER.
INSIDE THE BUILDING, THEN.
USE IT FOR COVER, WHILE WE FIGURE OUR NEXT MOVE.


NO!
STOP THEM, FREEDOM FORCE, AT ANY COST!
THEY MUSTN'T ENTER THAT ACCURSED TOWER!
DON'T FRET, DESTINY. FREEDOM FORCE HAS THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND.
WE'LL RESCUE MYSTIQUE, YOU HAVE MY WORD.
FOOL!
YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
BLIND THOUGH I AM, I CAN SEE THE FUTURE.
ONE FUTURE!
A CRUCIAL MOMENT IN THE TIMESTREAM SO PRIMALLY IMPORTANT IT OVERWHELMS ALL ALTERNATIVES!
WHOEVER IS INSIDE EAGLE PLAZA WHEN DAWN BREAKS...
...WILL DIE!
AND, ALMOST ON CUE...
COMMANDO, WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
WHY DOES MY FACE SUDDENLY FEEL SO WARM?
THERE'S A GREAT, GAPING HOLE TORN IN THE SKY, OLD WOMAN.
AND SUNLIGHT SHINING THROUGH IT.
THEN--IT HAS BEGUN.
THE END, I FEAR, OF THE X-MEN...
... AND POSSIBLY, THE WORLD!
NEXT ISSUE: GO TELL THE SPARTANS!

MARVEL
THE FALL OF THE MUTANTS
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
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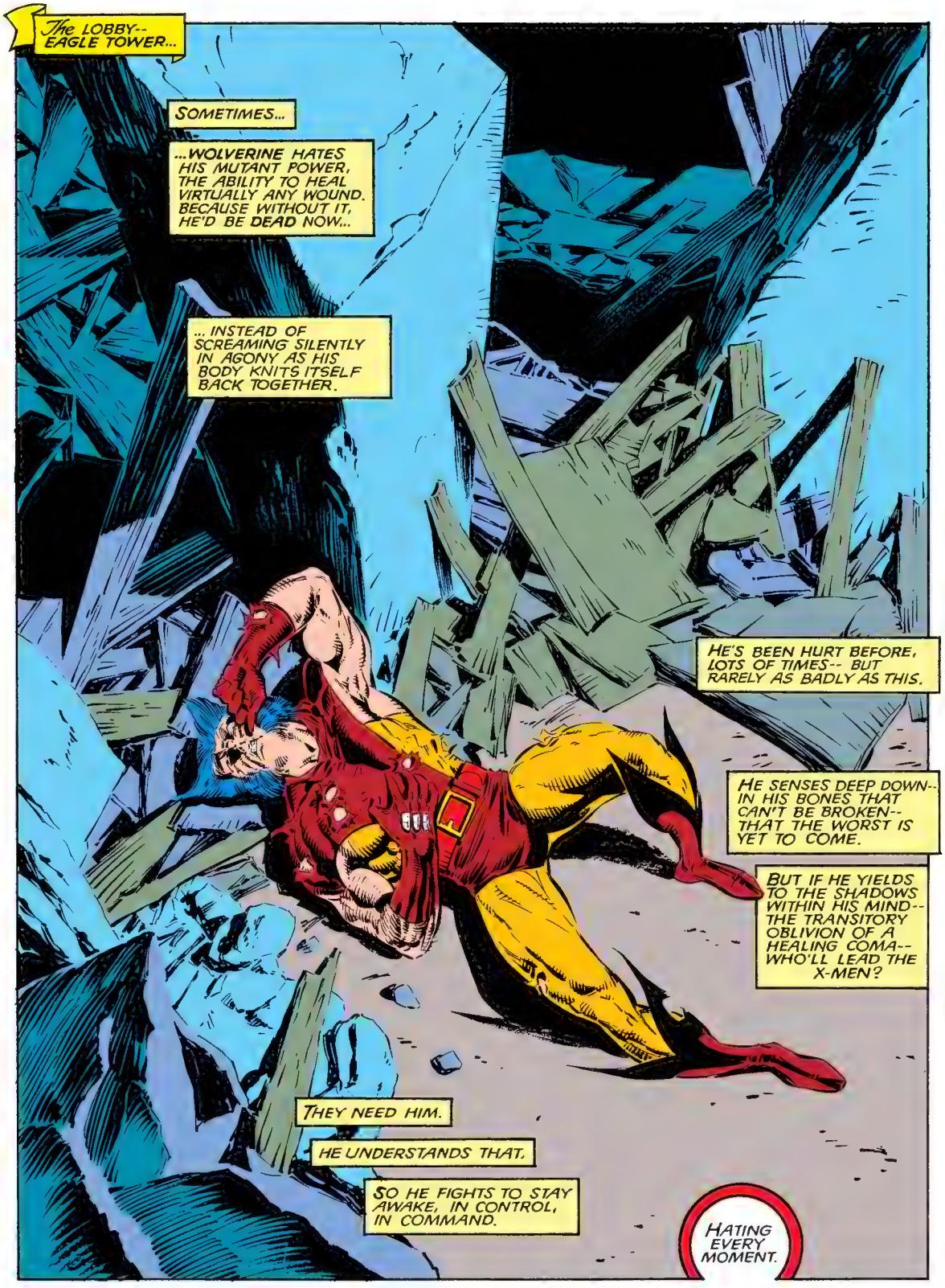
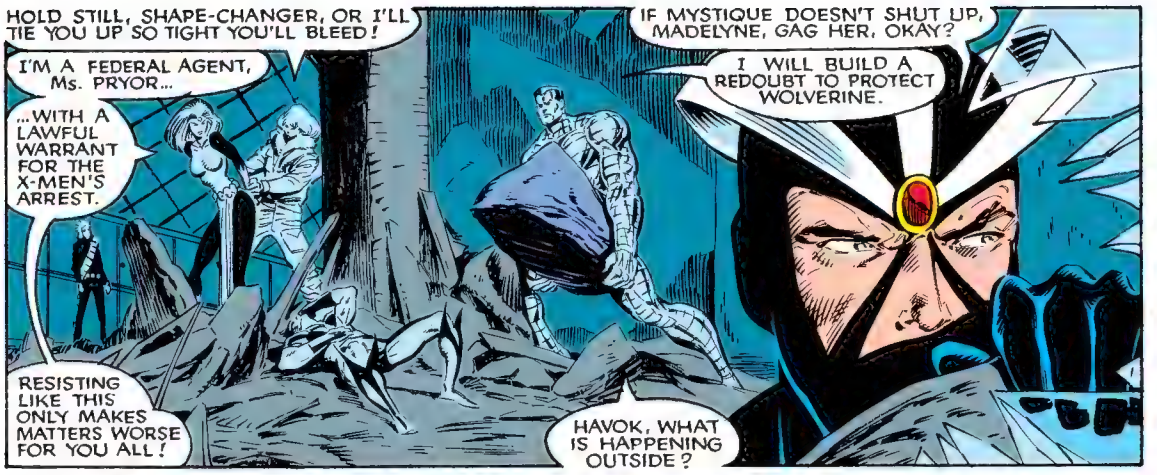

The LOBBY-- EAGLE TOWER...
SOMETIMES...
...WOLVERINE HATES HIS MUTANT POWER, THE ABILITY TO HEAL VIRTUALLY ANY WOUND. BECAUSE WITHOUT IT, HE'D BE DEAD NOW...
... INSTEAD OF SCREAMING SILENTLY IN AGONY AS HIS BODY KNITS ITSELF BACK TOGETHER.
HE'S BEEN HURT BEFORE, LOTS OF TIMES-- BUT RARELY AS BADLY AS THIS.
HE SENSES DEEP DOWN-- IN HIS BONES THAT CAN'T BE BROKEN-- THAT THE WORST IS YET TO COME.
BUT IF HE YIELDS TO THE SHADOWS WITHIN HIS MIND-- THE TRANSITORY OBLIVION OF A HEALING COMA-- WHO'LL LEAD THE X-MEN?
THEY NEED HIM.
HE UNDERSTANDS THAT.
SO HE FIGHTS TO STAY AWAKE, IN CONTROL, IN COMMAND.
HATING EVERY MOMENT.

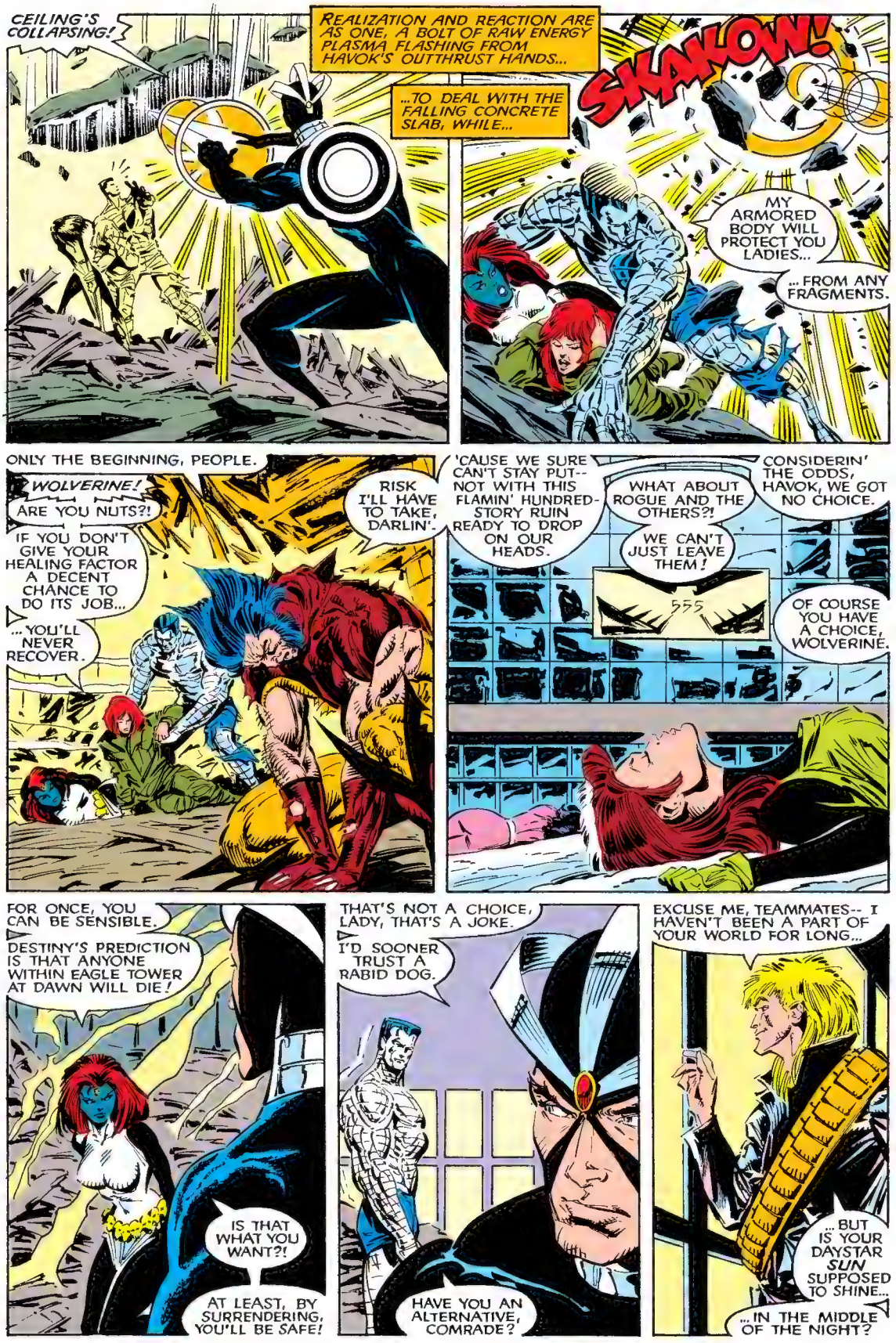

HOLD STILL, SHAPE-CHANGER, OR I'LL TIE YOU UP SO TIGHT YOU'LL BLEED!
I'M A FEDERAL AGENT, Ms. PRYOR...
...WITH A LAWFUL WARRANT FOR THE X-MEN'S ARREST.
RESISTING LIKE THIS ONLY MAKES MATTERS WORSE FOR YOU ALL!
IF MYSTIQUE DOESN'T SHUT UP, MADELYNE, GAG HER, OKAY?
I WILL BUILD A REDOUBT TO PROTECT WOLVERINE.
HAVOK, WHAT IS HAPPENING OUTSIDE?

NOTHING.
MYSTIQUE'S FREEDOM FORCE GOONS ARE JUST STANDING AROUND.
THIS IS CRAZY!
THE WORLD'S TURNED UPSIDE-DOWN-- BECOME A NIGHTMARE WHERE WE X-MEN ARE VILLAINS...
...AND SOME OF OUR OLDEST ENEMIES, THE GOOD GUYS.
THEY'VE GOT THREE OF OURS PRISONER-- PSYLOCKE, DAZZLER AND ROGUE-- I WONDER IF WE CAN TRADE MYSTIQUE FOR 'EM? BUT WHAT DO WE DO THEN?
THAT OLD LADY-- THEIR PRECOG, DESTINY-- LOOKS PRETTY UPSET.

"WISH I COULD HEAR WHAT SHE'S SAYING."
...GONE ALL GONE...
...INNER SIGHT AS BLIND AND USELESS...
...AS MY EYES!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, WOMAN?
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT MYSTIQUE--?!
FOOL! SHE IS NOTHING, WE ARE NOTHING!
MY POWER, COMMANDO, IS TO "SEE" THE FUTURE.
BUT FOR US, FOR THE X-MEN-- PERHAPS EVEN OUR WORLD--
--I SEE NONE!

HEADS UP, GUYS. THE SPEEDSTER-- SUPER-SABRE-- JUST TOOK OFF...
... PROBABLY TO COVER THE BACK DOOR--
--X-MEN, LOOK OUT!


CEILING'S COLLAPSING!
REALIZATION AND REACTION ARE AS ONE, A BOLT OF RAW ENERGY PLASMA FLASHING FROM HAVOK'S OUTTHRUST HANDS...
...TO DEAL WITH THE FALLING CONCRETE SLAB, WHILE...
SKAKOOM!
MY ARMORED BODY WILL PROTECT YOU LADIES...
...FROM ANY FRAGMENTS.
ONLY THE BEGINNING, PEOPLE.
WOLVERINE! ARE YOU NUTS?!
IF YOU DON'T GIVE YOUR HEALING FACTOR A DECENT CHANCE TO DO ITS JOB...
...YOU'LL NEVER RECOVER.
RISK I'LL HAVE TO TAKE, DARLIN'.
'CAUSE WE SURE CAN'T STAY PUT-- NOT WITH THIS FLAMIN' HUNDRED-STORY RUIN READY TO DROP ON OUR HEADS.
WHAT ABOUT ROGUE AND THE OTHERS?!
WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE THEM!
555
CONSIDERIN' THE ODDS, HAVOK, WE GOT NO CHOICE.
OF COURSE YOU HAVE A CHOICE, WOLVERINE.
FOR ONCE, YOU CAN BE SENSIBLE.
DESTINY'S PREDICTION IS THAT ANYONE WITHIN EAGLE TOWER AT DAWN WILL DIE!
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT?!
AT LEAST, BY SURRENDERING, YOU'LL BE SAFE!
THAT'S NOT A CHOICE, LADY, THAT'S A JOKE.
I'D SOONER TRUST A RABID DOG.
HAVE YOU AN ALTERNATIVE, COMRADE?
EXCUSE ME, TEAMMATES-- I HAVEN'T BEEN A PART OF YOUR WORLD FOR LONG...
...BUT IS YOUR DAYSTAR SUN SUPPOSED TO SHINE...
...IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?

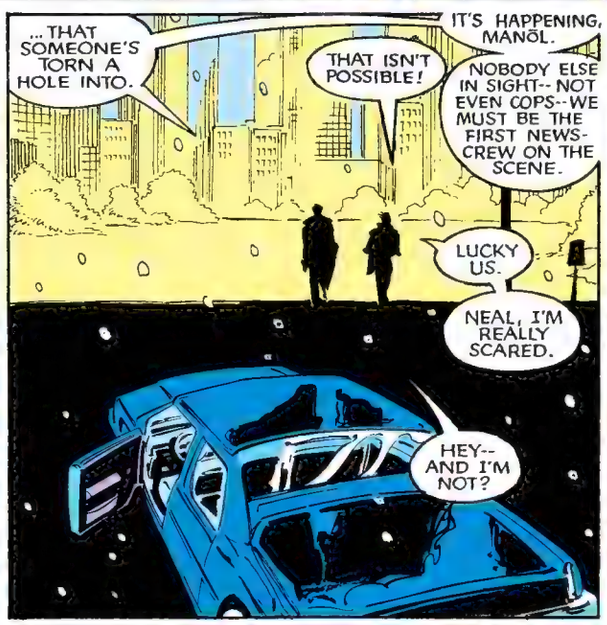
Stan Lee presents

GO TELL THE SPARTANS

CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER
MARC SILVESTRI DAN GREEN
ARTISTS
OLIVER & WRAY, COLORIST
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER
ANN NOCENTI, EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO, EDITOR IN CHIEF

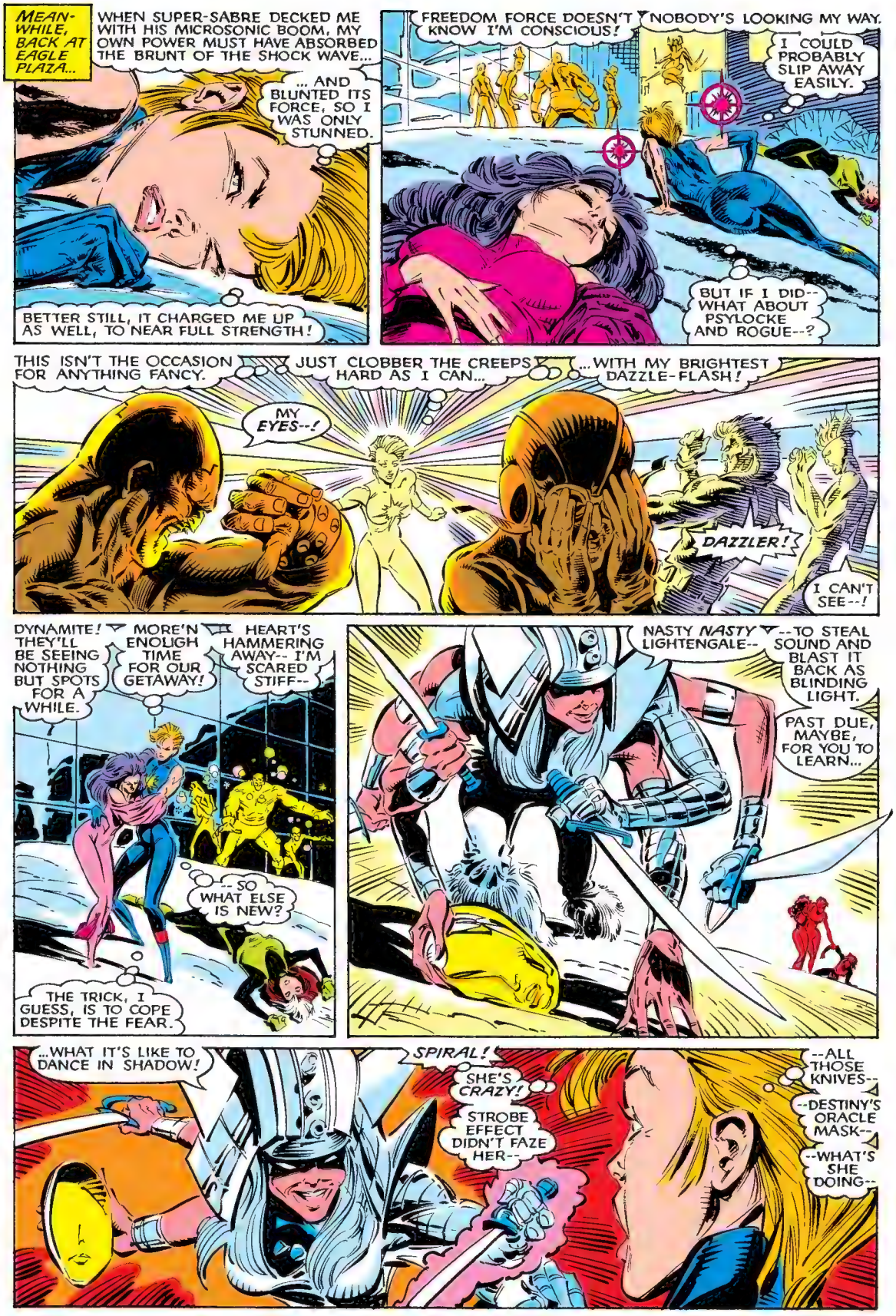
NEAL-- WE'RE SKIDDING!
I GOT IT I GOT IT--
--WHADDYA EXPECT, MANOLI--
--TEXAS CARS DON'T COME EQUIPPED WITH SNOW TIRES...
...ESPECIALLY IN MID-SUMMER!

YEAH, WELL, MY WATCH SAYS THREE a.m.-- SO HOW COME THE DOWNTOWN'S LIT UP LIKE NOON?
WHAT AM I, THE ANSWER MAN?
USUALLY.
NEAL, LOOK AT THE SKY!
LIKE IT REALLY IS A PIECE OF VELVET...
NPR

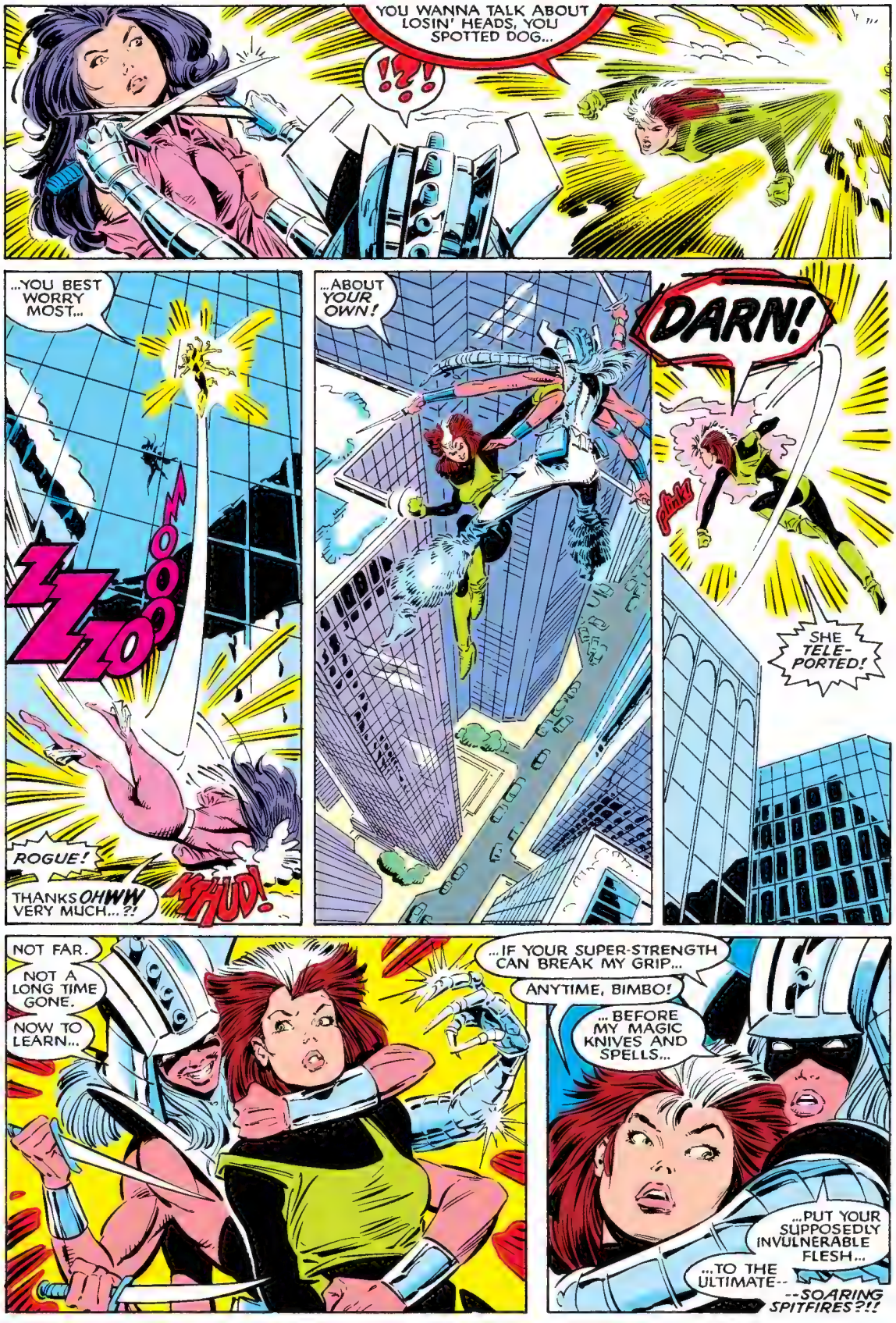

...THAT SOMEONE'S TORN A HOLE INTO.
IT'S HAPPENING, MANOL.
THAT ISN'T POSSIBLE!
NOBODY ELSE IN SIGHT-- NOT EVEN COPS--WE MUST BE THE FIRST NEWS-CREW ON THE SCENE.
LUCKY US.
NEAL, I'M REALLY SCARED.
HEY-- AND I'M NOT?

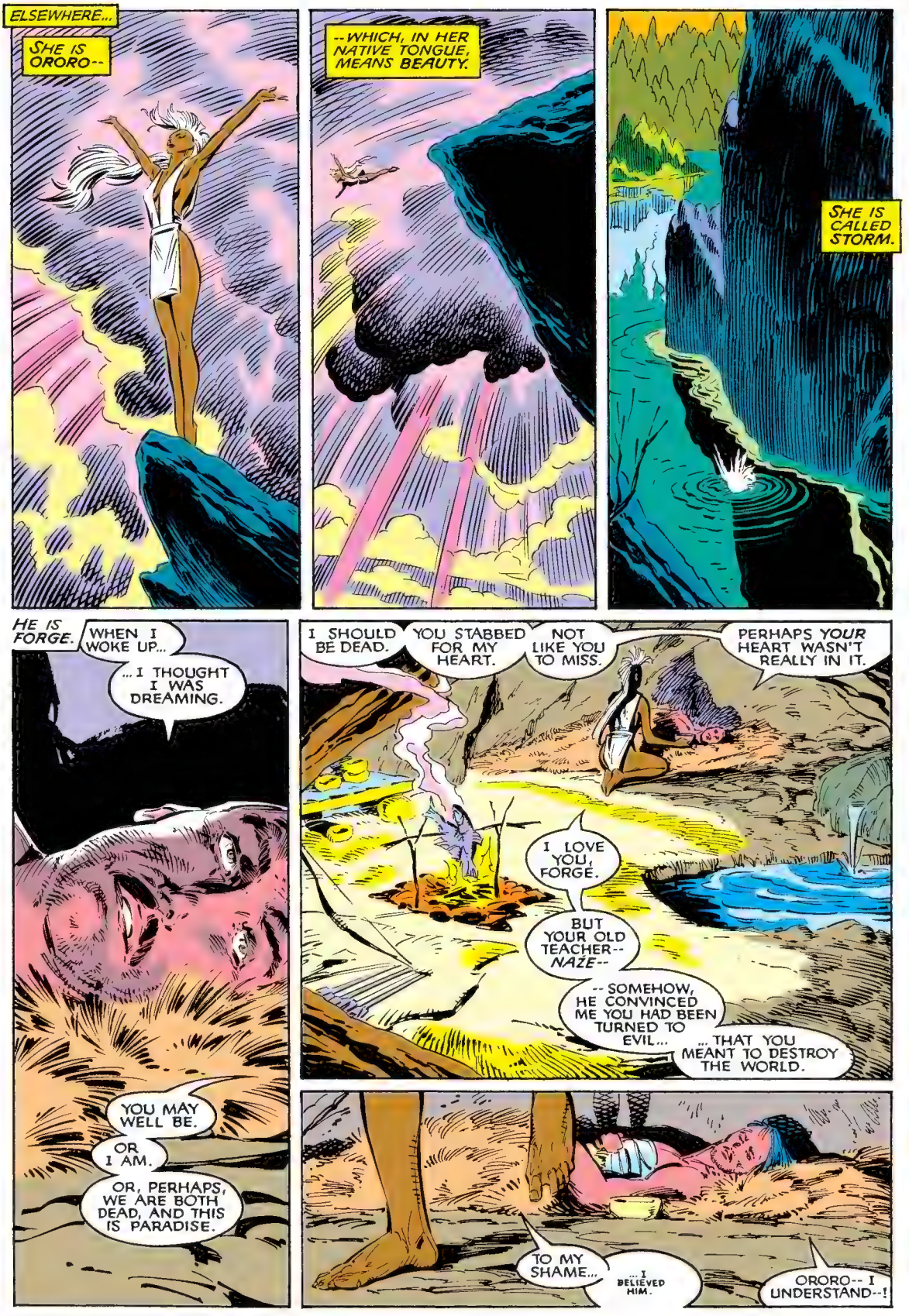
NIGHT, OUR SIDE. DAY, THE OTHER.
WINTER, HERE. SUMMER, THERE.
DIVIDING LINE'S SO SHARP, YOU'D THINK THERE WAS AN INVISIBLE WALL.
YOU GOING ACROSS?
WE'RE JOURNALISTS, MANOLI.

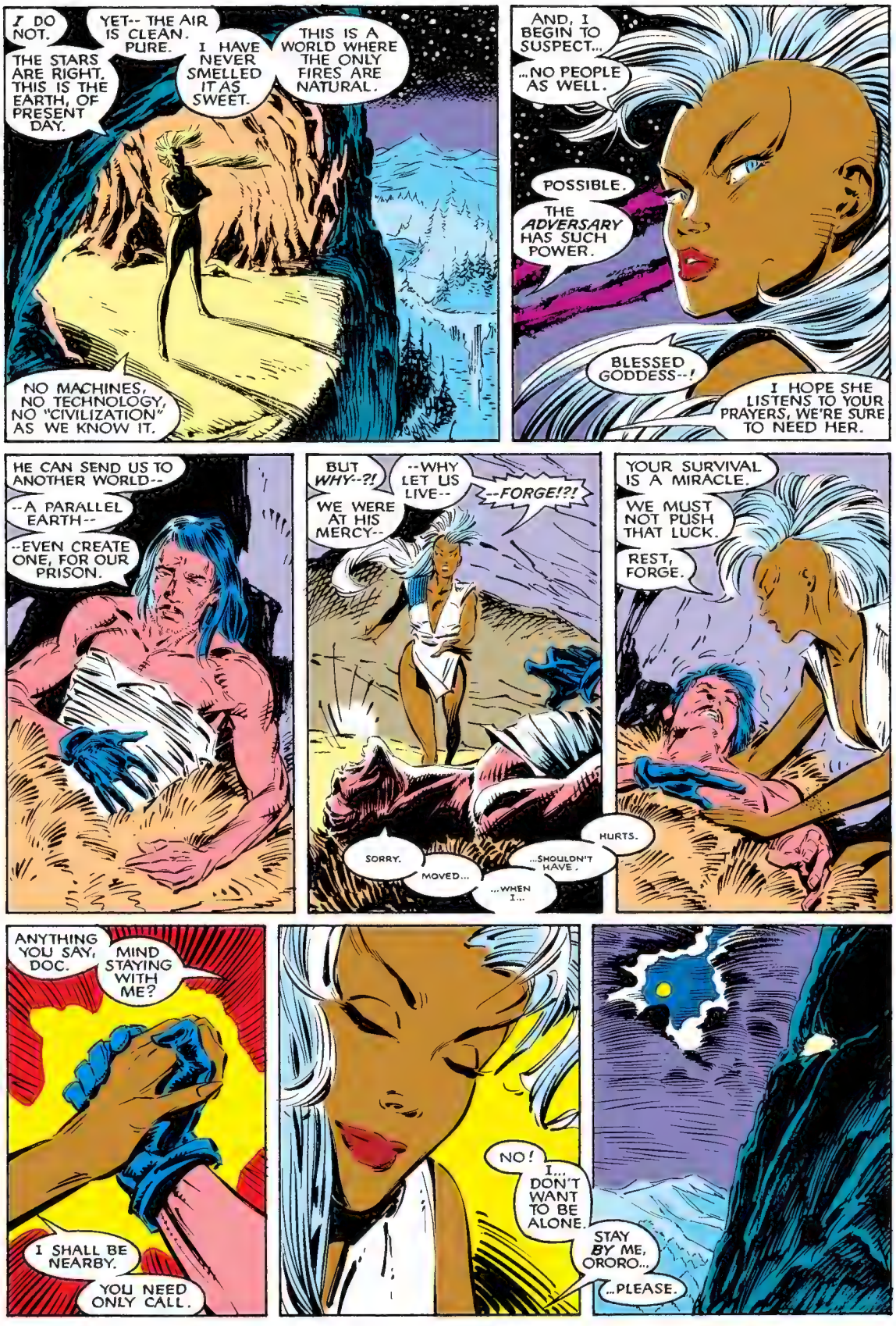
YOU'RE THE REPORTER, KEMO SABE. I'M THE ENGINEER.
THIS COULD BE THE STORY OF A LIFETIME. I CAN'T LET IT PASS ME BY.
I KNOW. I JUST HOPE--
--THOSE DON'T TURN OUT TO BE FAMOUS LAST WORDS.

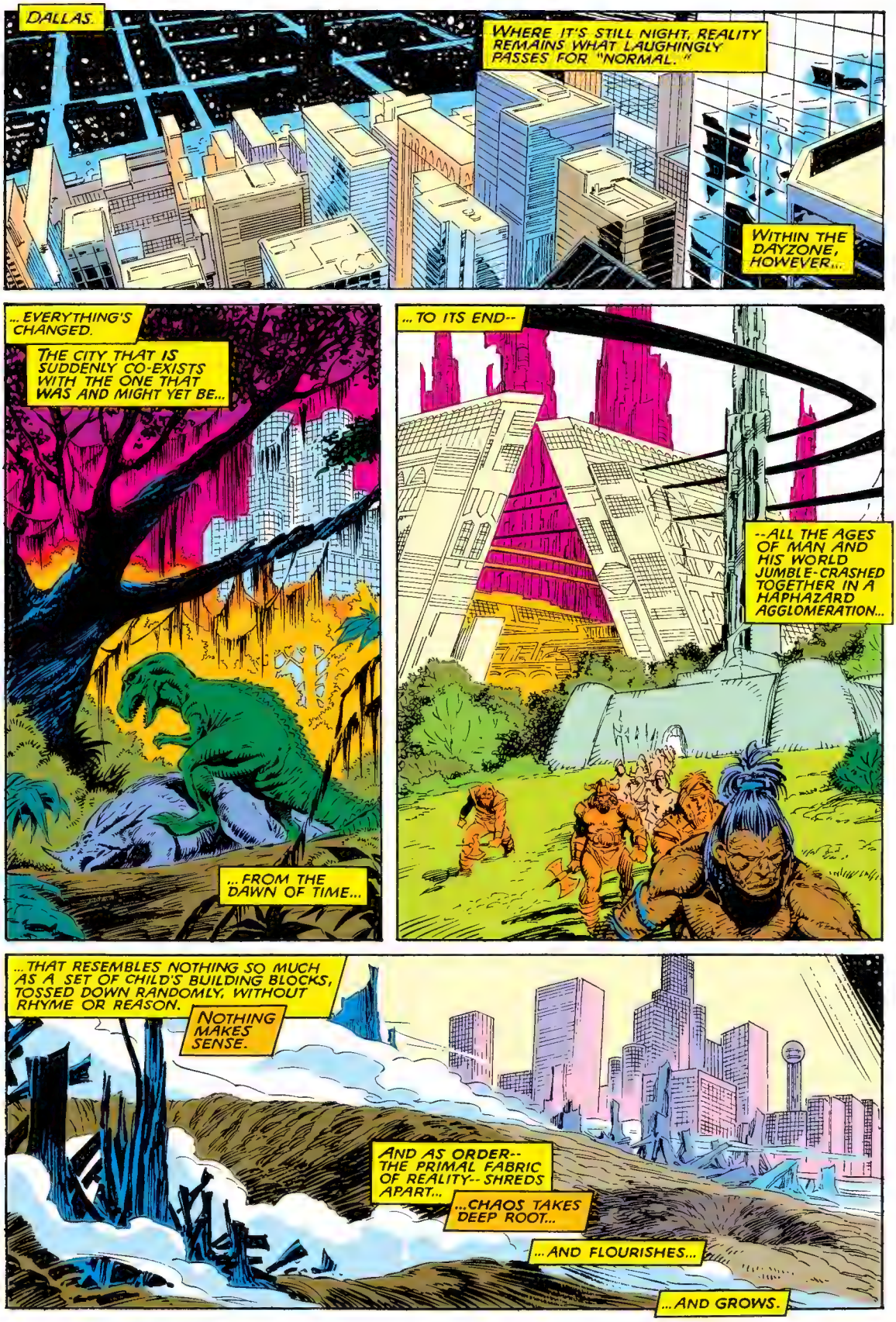

MEANWHILE, BACK AT EAGLE PLAZA...
WHEN SUPER-SABRE DECKED ME WITH HIS MICROSONIC BOOM, MY OWN POWER MUST HAVE ABSORBED THE BRUNT OF THE SHOCK WAVE...
... AND BLUNTED ITS FORCE, SO I WAS ONLY STUNNED.
BETTER STILL, IT CHARGED ME UP AS WELL, TO NEAR FULL STRENGTH!
FREEDOM FORCE DOESN'T KNOW I'M CONSCIOUS!
NOBODY'S LOOKING MY WAY.
I COULD PROBABLY SLIP AWAY EASILY.
BUT IF I DID-- WHAT ABOUT PSYLOCKE AND ROGUE--?
THIS ISN'T THE OCCASION FOR ANYTHING FANCY.
JUST CLOBBER THE CREEPS HARD AS I CAN...
...WITH MY BRIGHTEST DAZZLE-FLASH!
MY EYES--!
DAZZLER!
I CAN'T SEE--!
DYNAMITE! THEY'LL BE SEEING NOTHING BUT SPOTS FOR A WHILE.
MORE'N ENOUGH TIME FOR OUR GETAWAY!
HEART'S HAMMERING AWAY-- I'M SCARED STIFF--
-- SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW?
THE TRICK, I GUESS, IS TO COPE DESPITE THE FEAR.
NASTY NASTY LIGHTENGALE--
--TO STEAL SOUND AND BLAST IT BACK AS BLINDING LIGHT.
PAST DUE, MAYBE, FOR YOU TO LEARN...
...WHAT IT'S LIKE TO DANCE IN SHADOW!
SPIRAL!
SHE'S CRAZY!
STROBE EFFECT DIDN'T FAZE HER--
--ALL THOSE KNIVES--
--DESTINY'S ORACLE MASK--
--WHAT'S SHE DOING--

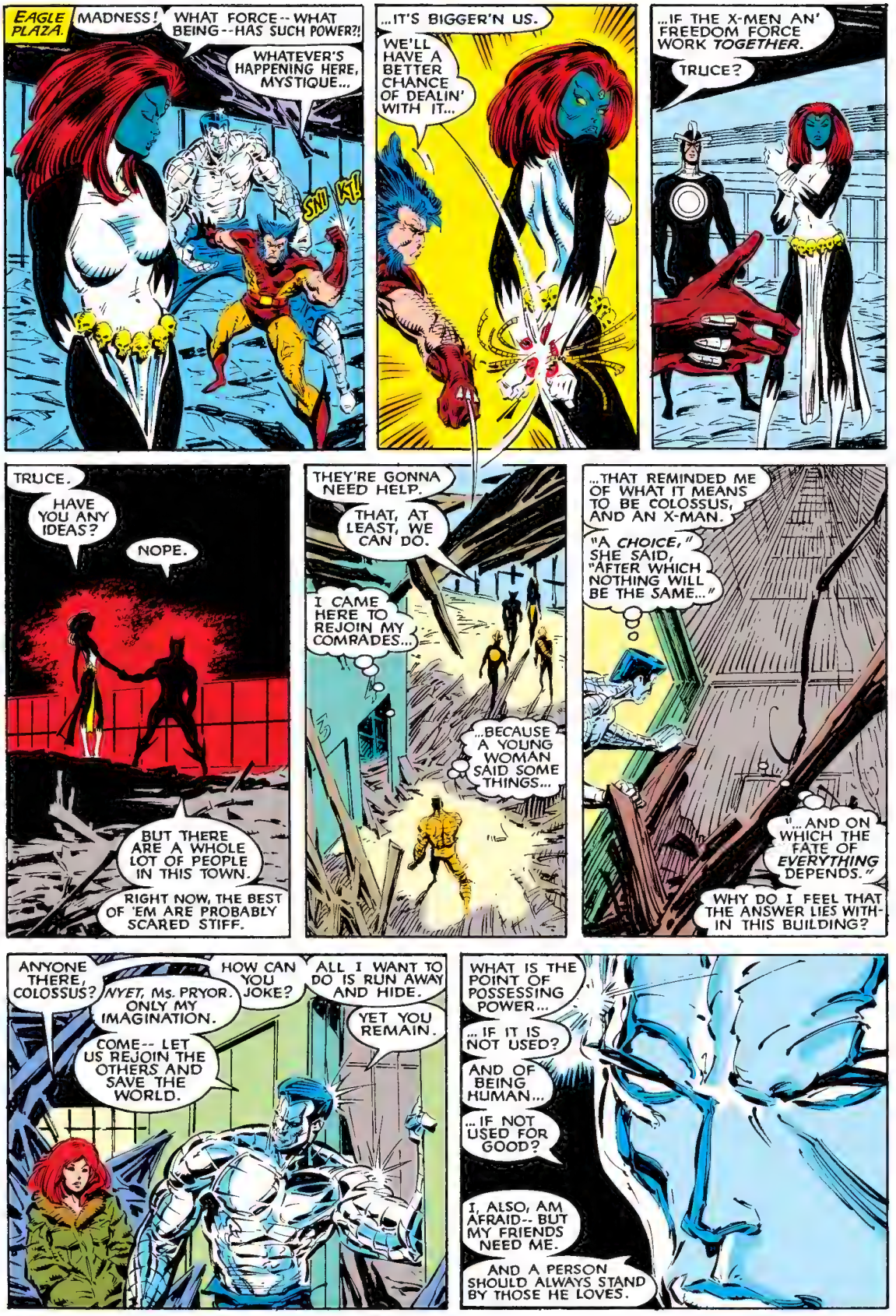
--GET AWAY!?!
WHY COMPLAIN?
NEW FACE FOR OLD--
--PRETTIER BY FAR...
...AND ONE THAT WILL NEVER AGE!
A FINAL TOUCH...
...TO MAKE THE SPELL COMPLETE.
AIEIEIEI
NO MORE LASER LOOKS, SONGBIRD.
NO WAY TO CAST YOUR BRILLIANTS.
NO WAY OF KNOWING WHERE TO THROW.
NO AIE NO AIE NO AIE
ALISON!
DISTINCT IMPROVEMENT.
INHUMAN MONSTER-- YOU'VE MURDERED HER!
WANT TO BRAINSMASH ME, TELEPATH?
THINK AGAIN. TRY HARDER.
YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS ATROCITY, SPIRAL.
DOUBTFUL. SHE'S FAR FROM DEAD, AND HARDLY EVEN HURT.
MORE THAN CAN BE SAID FOR YOU.
MASK IS REAL, BLADE IS NOT.
AT THE PROPER TIME, WITH THE PROPER ENCHANTMENT...
...BOTH CAN BE REMOVED.
BUT YOU, PSYLOCKE PSIWITCH, ARE FAR MORE DANGEROUS.
YOU READ THOUGHTS-- CAN CONTROL PEOPLES' HEADS.
BEST THEN, FOR ALL CONCERNED...
...YOU BE WITHOUT YOUR OWN.


YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT LOSIN' HEADS, YOU SPOTTED DOG...
!?!
...YOU BEST WORRY MOST...
ZZZOOOOM
ROGUE!
THANKS OHWW VERY MUCH...?!
KHUD!
...ABOUT YOUR OWN!
DARN!
plink!
SHE TELE-PORTED!
NOT FAR.
NOT A LONG TIME GONE.
NOW TO LEARN...
...IF YOUR SUPER-STRENGTH CAN BREAK MY GRIP...
ANYTIME, BIMBO!
...BEFORE MY MAGIC KNIVES AND SPELLS...
...PUT YOUR SUPPOSEDLY INVULNERABLE FLESH...
...TO THE ULTIMATE--
--SOARING SPITFIRES?!!


ELSEWHERE...
SHE IS ORORO--
--WHICH, IN HER NATIVE TONGUE, MEANS BEAUTY.
SHE IS CALLED STORM.
HE IS FORGE.
WHEN I WOKE UP...
...I THOUGHT I WAS DREAMING.
YOU MAY WELL BE.
OR I AM.
OR, PERHAPS, WE ARE BOTH DEAD, AND THIS IS PARADISE.
I SHOULD BE DEAD.
YOU STABBED FOR MY HEART.
NOT LIKE YOU TO MISS.
PERHAPS YOUR HEART WASN'T REALLY IN IT.
I LOVE YOU, FORGE.
BUT YOUR OLD TEACHER-- NAZE--
-- SOMEHOW, HE CONVINCED ME YOU HAD BEEN TURNED TO EVIL...
... THAT YOU MEANT TO DESTROY THE WORLD.
TO MY SHAME...
...I BELIEVED HIM.
ORORO-- I UNDERSTAND--!


I DO NOT.
THE STARS ARE RIGHT. THIS IS THE EARTH, OF PRESENT DAY.
YET-- THE AIR IS CLEAN. PURE.
I HAVE NEVER SMELLED IT AS SWEET.
THIS IS A WORLD WHERE THE ONLY FIRES ARE NATURAL.
NO MACHINES, NO TECHNOLOGY, NO "CIVILIZATION" AS WE KNOW IT.
AND, I BEGIN TO SUSPECT...
...NO PEOPLE AS WELL.
POSSIBLE.
THE ADVERSARY HAS SUCH POWER.
BLESSED GODDESS--!
I HOPE SHE LISTENS TO YOUR PRAYERS, WE'RE SURE TO NEED HER.
HE CAN SEND US TO ANOTHER WORLD--
--A PARALLEL EARTH--
--EVEN CREATE ONE, FOR OUR PRISON.
BUT WHY--?!
--WHY LET US LIVE--
--FORGE!?!
WE WERE AT HIS MERCY--
SORRY.
MOVED...
...WHEN I...
...SHOULDN'T HAVE.
HURTS.
YOUR SURVIVAL IS A MIRACLE.
WE MUST NOT PUSH THAT LUCK.
REST, FORGE.
ANYTHING YOU SAY, DOC.
MIND STAYING WITH ME?
I SHALL BE NEARBY.
YOU NEED ONLY CALL.
NO! I... DON'T WANT TO BE ALONE.
STAY BY ME, ORORO...
...PLEASE.

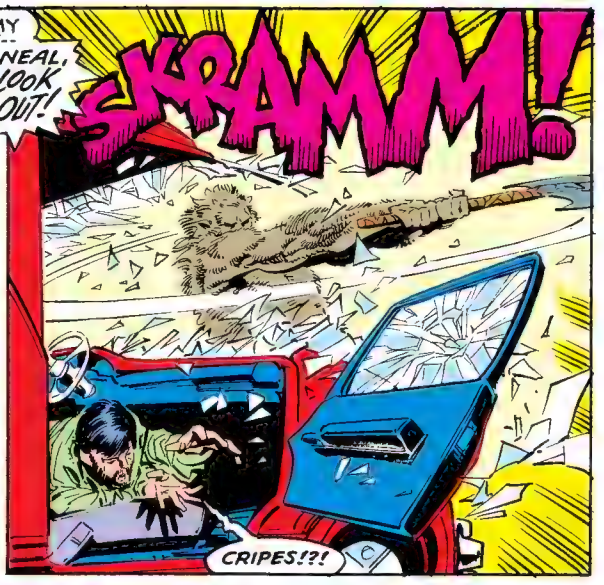

DALLAS.
WHERE IT'S STILL NIGHT, REALITY REMAINS WHAT LAUGHINGLY PASSES FOR "NORMAL."
WITHIN THE DAYZONE, HOWEVER...
...EVERYTHING'S CHANGED.
THE CITY THAT IS SUDDENLY CO-EXISTS WITH THE ONE THAT WAS AND MIGHT YET BE...
...FROM THE DAWN OF TIME...
...TO ITS END--
--ALL THE AGES OF MAN AND HIS WORLD JUMBLE-CRASHED TOGETHER IN A HAPHAZARD AGGLOMERATION...
...THAT RESEMBLES NOTHING SO MUCH AS A SET OF CHILD'S BUILDING BLOCKS, TOSSED DOWN RANDOMLY, WITHOUT RHYME OR REASON.
NOTHING MAKES SENSE.
AND AS ORDER-- THE PRIMAL FABRIC OF REALITY-- SHREDS APART...
...CHAOS TAKES DEEP ROOT...
...AND FLOURISHES...
...AND GROWS.

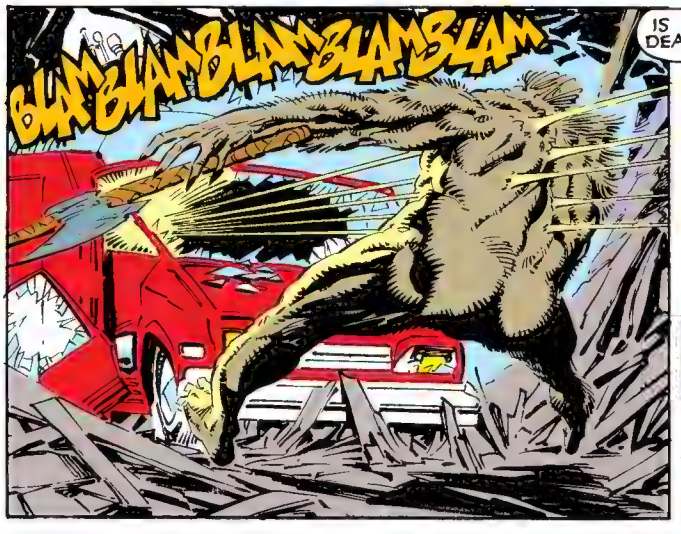

EAGLE PLAZA.
MADNESS!
WHAT FORCE--WHAT BEING--HAS SUCH POWER?!
WHATEVER'S HAPPENING HERE, MYSTIQUE...
SNIKT!
...IT'S BIGGER'N US.
WE'LL HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF DEALIN' WITH IT...
...IF THE X-MEN AN' FREEDOM FORCE WORK TOGETHER.
TRUCE?
TRUCE.
HAVE YOU ANY IDEAS?
NOPE.
BUT THERE ARE A WHOLE LOT OF PEOPLE IN THIS TOWN.
RIGHT NOW, THE BEST OF 'EM ARE PROBABLY SCARED STIFF.
THEY'RE GONNA NEED HELP.
THAT, AT LEAST, WE CAN DO.
I CAME HERE TO REJOIN MY COMRADES...
...BECAUSE A YOUNG WOMAN SAID SOME THINGS...
...THAT REMINDED ME OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE COLOSSUS, AND AN X-MAN.
"A CHOICE," SHE SAID, "AFTER WHICH NOTHING WILL BE THE SAME..."
"...AND ON WHICH THE FATE OF EVERYTHING DEPENDS."
WHY DO I FEEL THAT THE ANSWER LIES WITHIN THIS BUILDING?
ANYONE THERE, COLOSSUS?
NYET, Ms. PRYOR. ONLY MY IMAGINATION.
COME-- LET US REJOIN THE OTHERS AND SAVE THE WORLD.
HOW CAN YOU JOKE?
YET YOU REMAIN.
ALL I WANT TO DO IS RUN AWAY AND HIDE.
WHAT IS THE POINT OF POSSESSING POWER...
...IF IT IS NOT USED?
AND OF BEING HUMAN...
...IF NOT USED FOR GOOD?
I, ALSO, AM AFRAID-- BUT MY FRIENDS NEED ME.
AND A PERSON SHOULD ALWAYS STAND BY THOSE HE LOVES.

NEARBY...
SOME SORT OF REMOTE VIDEO VAN, NEAL.
IS EVERY-ONE...?
'FRAID SO.
FIRST PEOPLE WE'VE SEEN SINCE WE HIT TOWN...
ATTACK OF THE KILLER PACIFISTS
GO GO GIRLS
MASSAGE
BOOKS MAGS MOVIES

...AND THEY'RE DEAD.
ONE SHELL GONE...
AT LEAST THEY TRIED TO FIGHT.
FIGHT WHAT, MANOL?
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE.
BUT IF THE ENGINE WORKS, HOW 'BOUT WE BLOW THIS POPSTAND...
...BEFORE FINDING OUT.

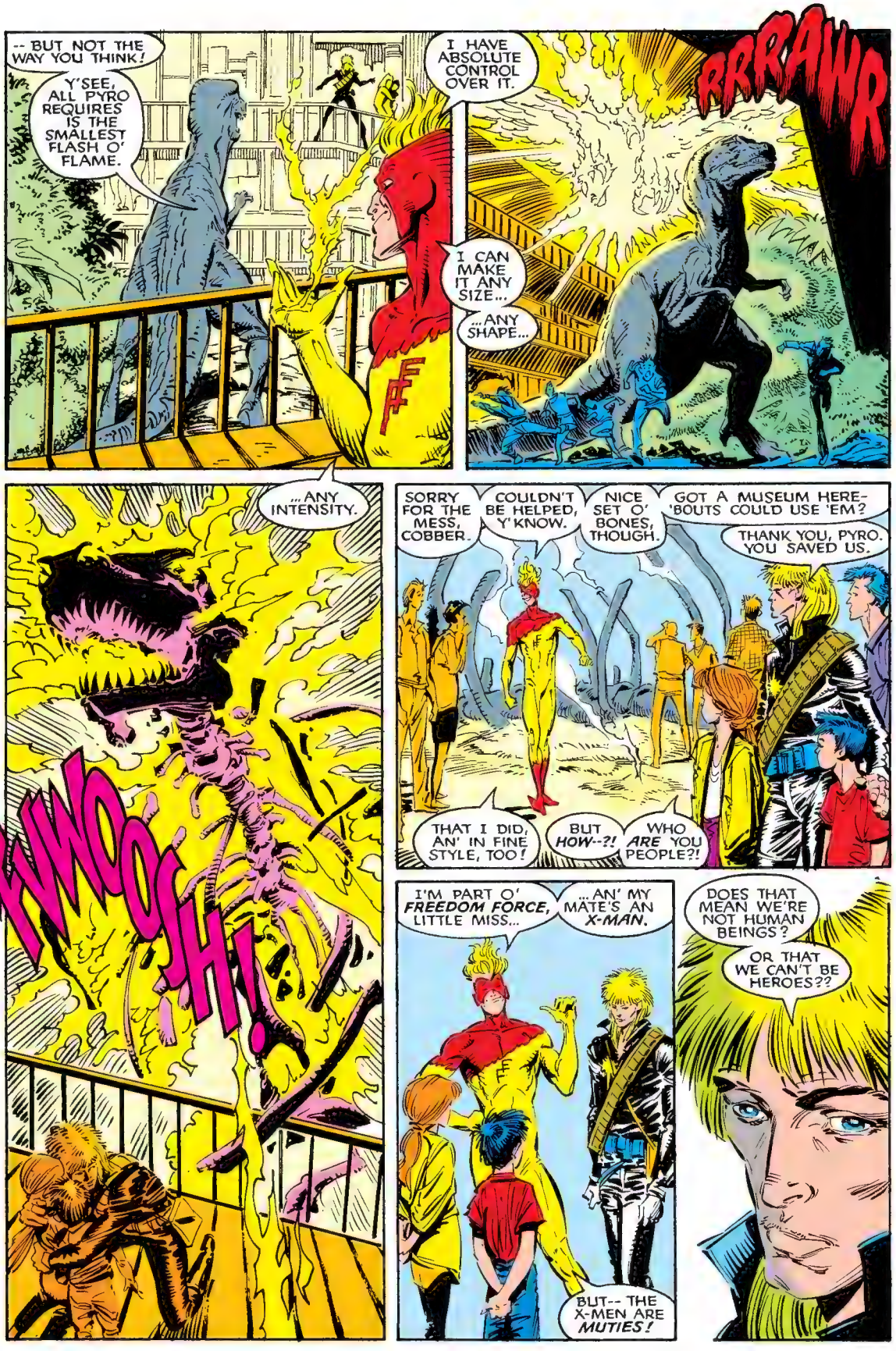
EQUIPMENT'S FASCINATING. BEYOND ANY-THING I'VE SEEN-- YET SO SIMPLE AN IDIOT COULD RUN IT.
Y'KNOW, NEAL-- I BET I COULD PLUG THIS THROUGH SATELLITES, INTO EVERY MAJOR RADIO AND TV NETWORK ON THE GLOBE.
GIVE IT A TRY.
DO MY BEST--
NEAL, LOOK OUT!


SKRAMM!
CRIPES!?!

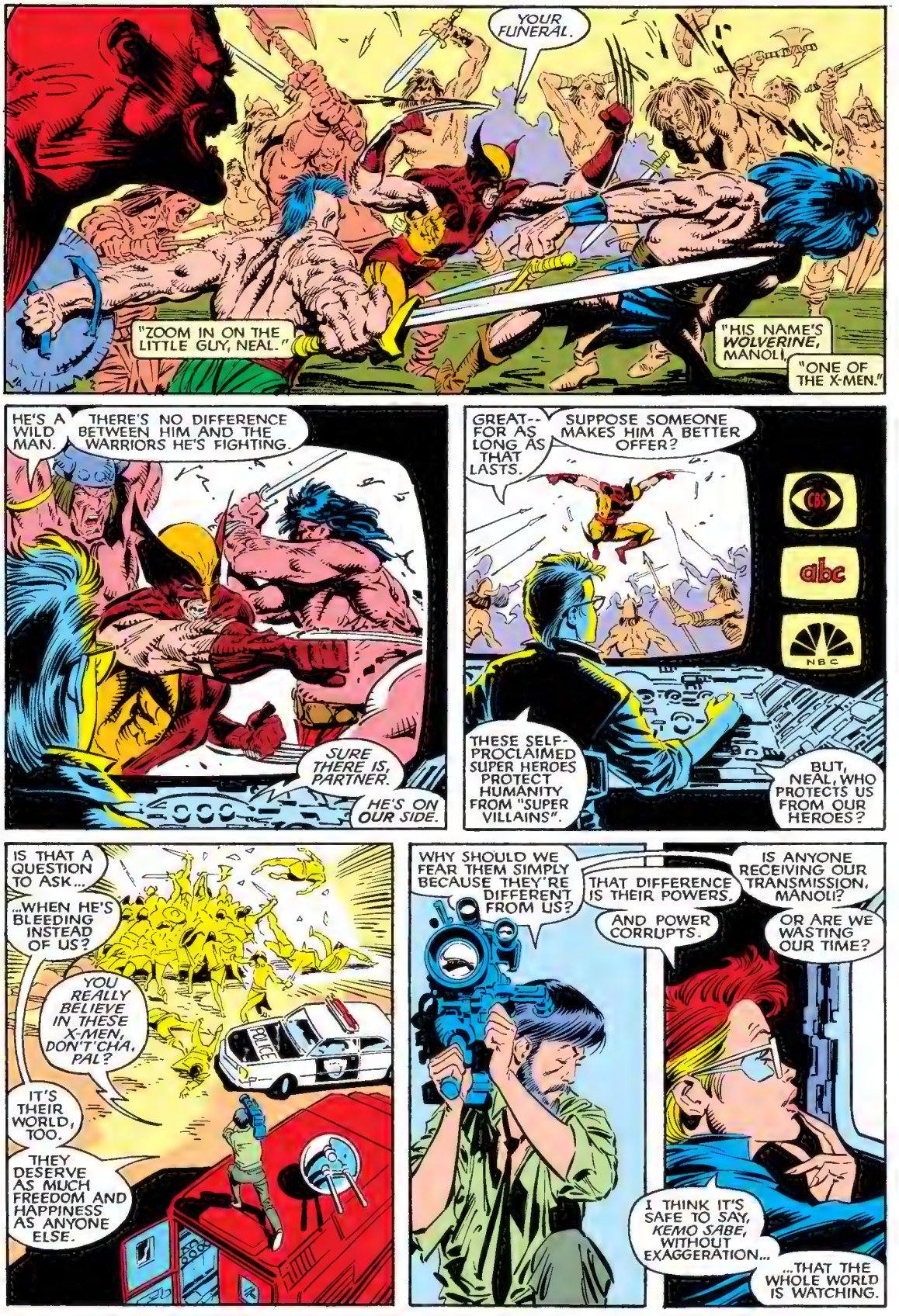

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

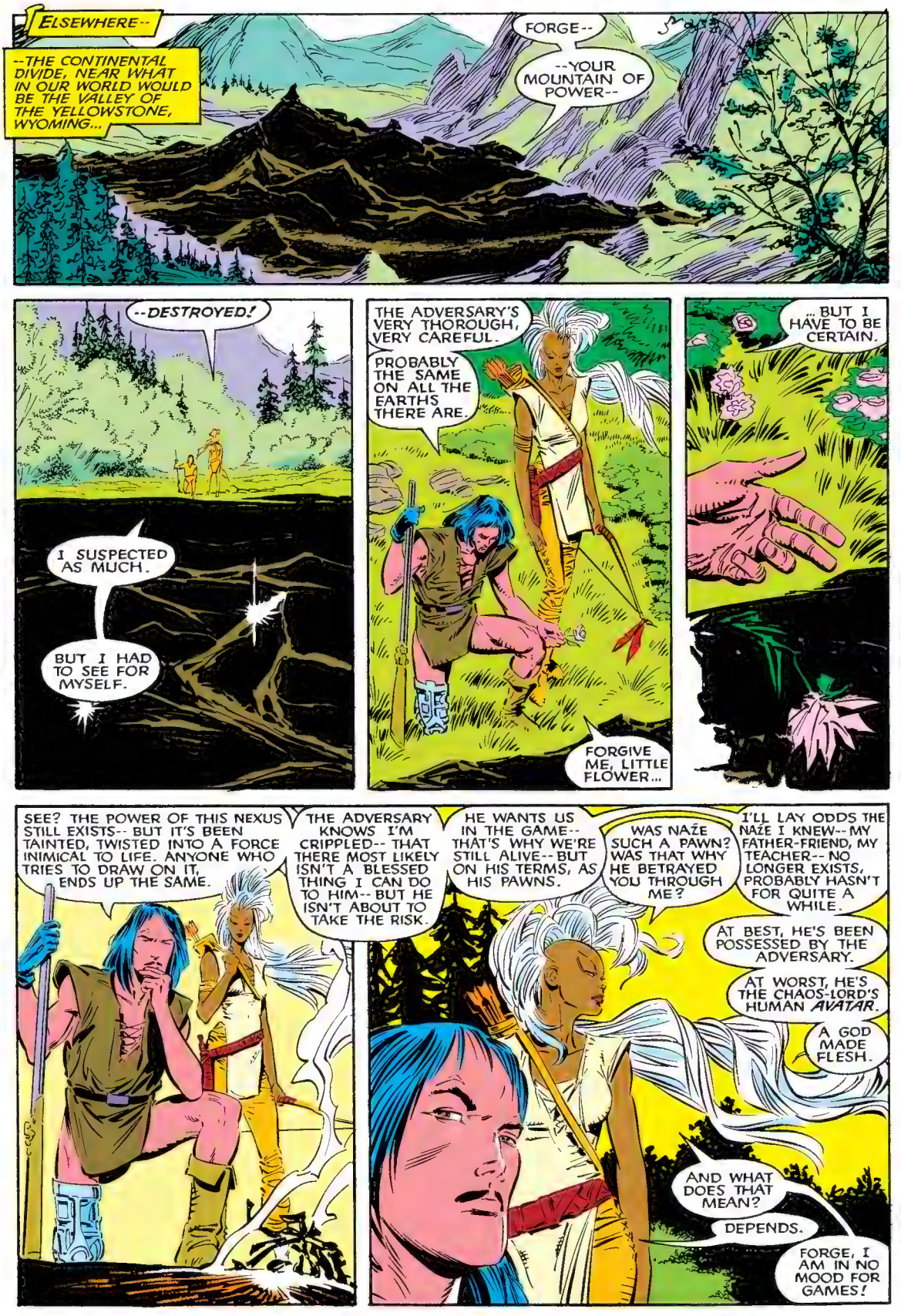
IS IT DEAD?
HE BETTER BE--I'M OUT OF SHELLS!
STINKING MUTIES-- I HAD A FEELING THEY'D BE INVOLVED.
HOW DO YOU KNOW IT'S THEM?
WHAT ELSE COULD IT BE?
ESTABLISH YOUR COMMUNICATIONS UPLINK.
I'LL GET US ROLLING.
AND, MANOLI-- FIND SOME MORE BULLETS!

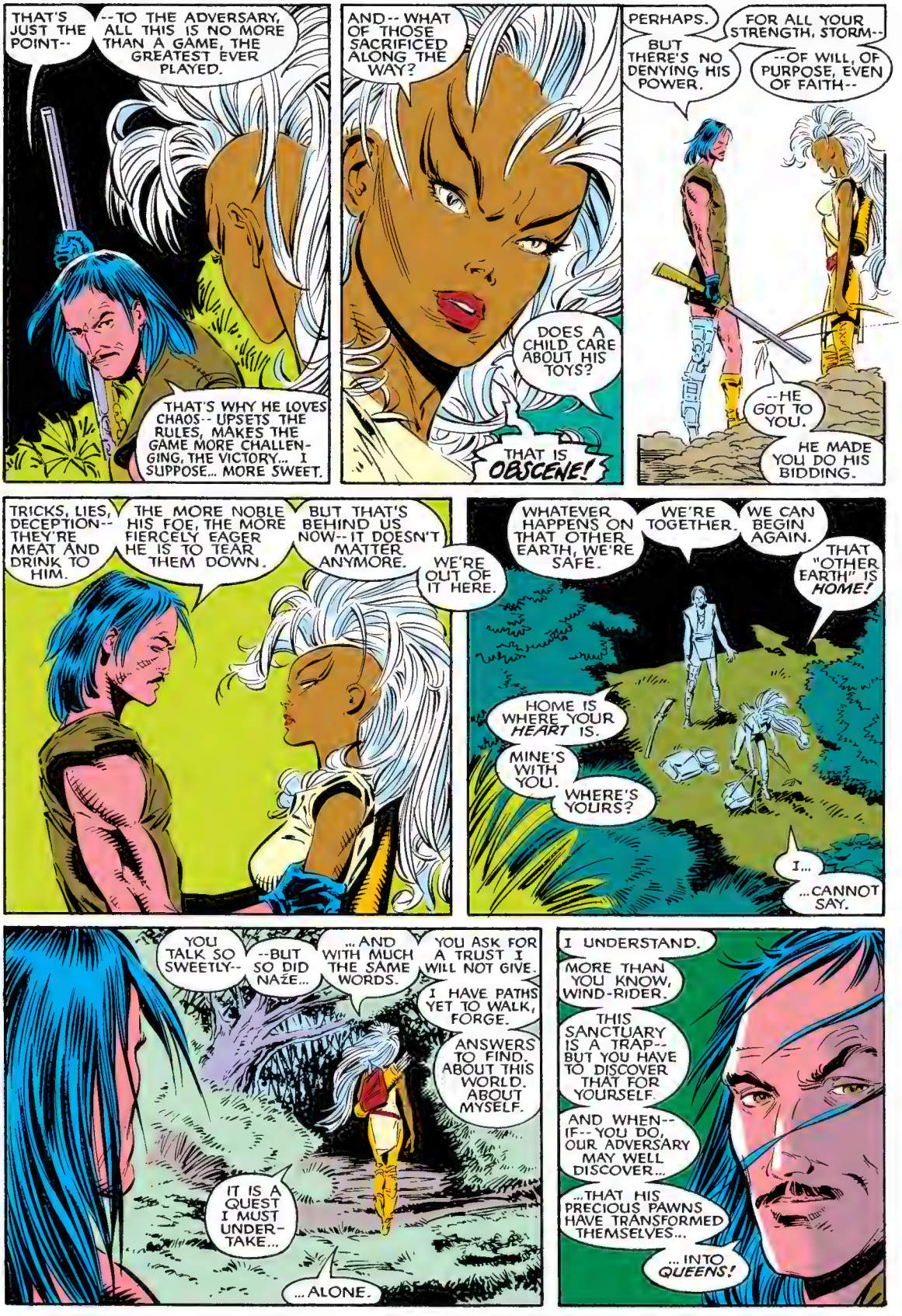
The GALLERIA--
--TRANSFORMED BY THE ELDRITCH TIMEWAVES INTO HALF SHOPPING MALL...
...HALF PRE-HISTORIC JUNGLE...
...COMPLETE WITH A VERY HUNGRY, VERY ANNOYED TYRANNOSAURUS REX.
GET UP, JIM-BOB!
STOP FOOLIN', BOY, YOU GOTTA RUN--NOW!
I CAN'T, CISSY-- I HURT MY LEG!
LEAVE ME! SAVE YOUR-SELF!!
NOT TO WORRY, YOUNGLINGS.
I'LL SAVE YOU BOTH!
Yaieep!
WAOW!
CHOMP!
PERSISTENT BEAST.
WE'RE GONNA DIE WE'RE GONNA DIE
OBLIGED TO YOU FOR AT LEAST TRYIN', MISTER.
HOLD ME TIGHT, CISSY.
DON'T LOOK. IT'LL BE OVER REAL QUICK.
RIGHT YOU ARE, LADDIE-BUCK--
-- O CHUM OF LITTLE FAITH--

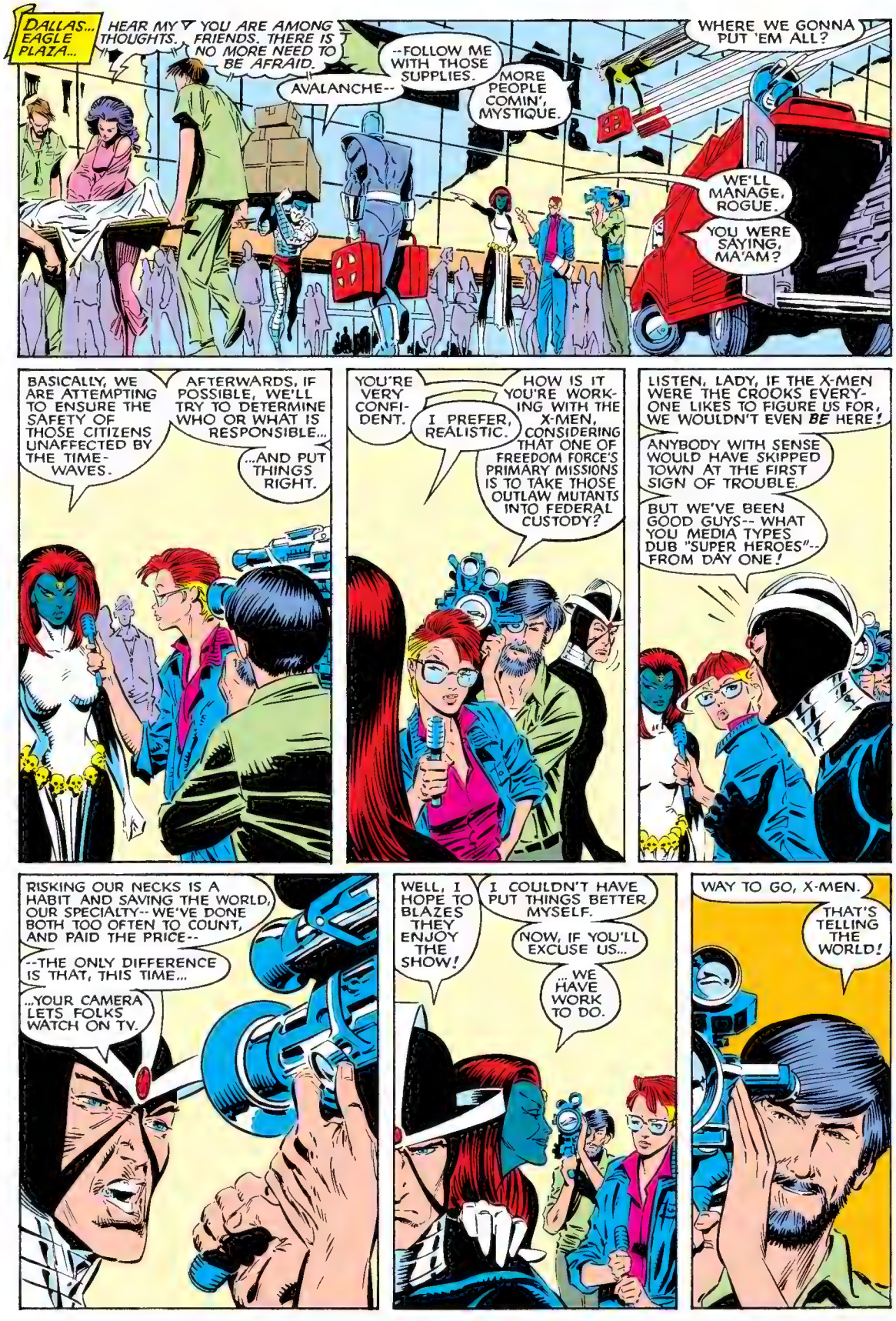

-- BUT NOT THE WAY YOU THINK!
Y'SEE, ALL PYRO REQUIRES IS THE SMALLEST FLASH O' FLAME.
I HAVE ABSOLUTE CONTROL OVER IT.
I CAN MAKE IT ANY SIZE...
...ANY SHAPE...
RRRAWR
...ANY INTENSITY.
FWOOSH!
SORRY FOR THE MESS, COBBER.
COULDN'T BE HELPED, Y'KNOW.
NICE SET O' BONES, THOUGH.
GOT A MUSEUM HERE- 'BOUTS COULD USE 'EM?
THANK YOU, PYRO. YOU SAVED US.
THAT I DID, AN' IN FINE STYLE, TOO!
BUT HOW--?!
WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?!
I'M PART O' FREEDOM FORCE, LITTLE MISS...
...AN' MY MATE'S AN X-MAN.
BUT-- THE X-MEN ARE MUTIES!
DOES THAT MEAN WE'RE NOT HUMAN BEINGS?
OR THAT WE CAN'T BE HEROES??

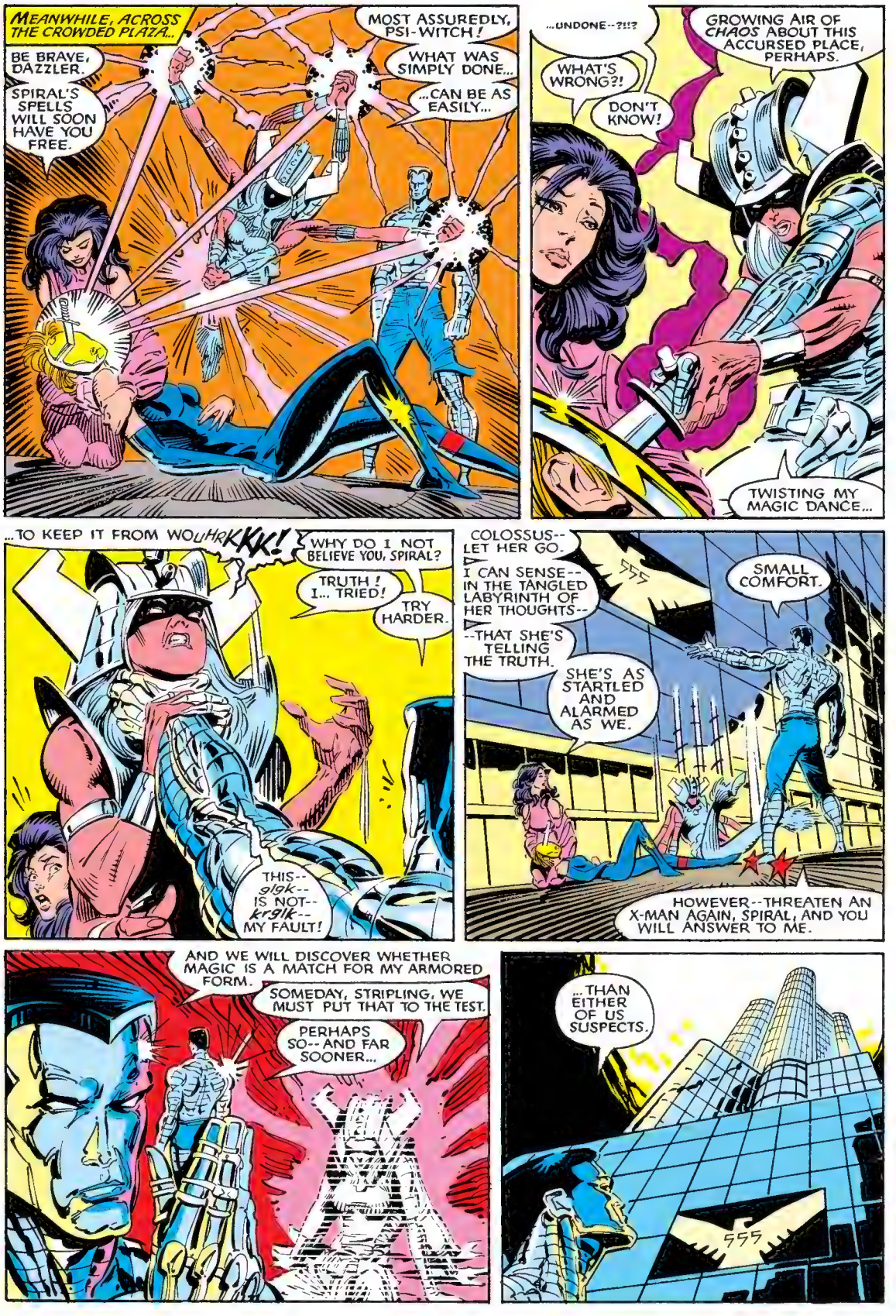
MEANWHILE, AT THE JUNCTION OF I-35 AND THE DALLAS NORTH TOLLWAY...
BLAM BLAM BLAM
BUDDABUDDA EEEOEEEOEEEO
THERE'S TOO MANY, RANGER!
WE'LL NEVER HOLD 'EM!
BLAM BLAM
KRAK KRAK KRAK
EEEOEEEO
BLAM
Paw!
WE'RE THE ONLY FORCE STANDIN' BETWEEN THEM AN' DOWNTOWN--
--WE GOT TO!
SAINTS-- A LADY THAT GUTSY...
...SHE JUST HAS TA BE RESCUED!
BOOM
WHASSA-MATTA, BOYS?
AIN'T NEVER BEEN HIT BY A SONIC BOOM BEFORE?
YOU'VE HAD YOUR FUN, GENTS.
YOU WANT TO QUIT WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD...
...OR PLAY ROUGH.
YOUR CHOICE.
SNIKT

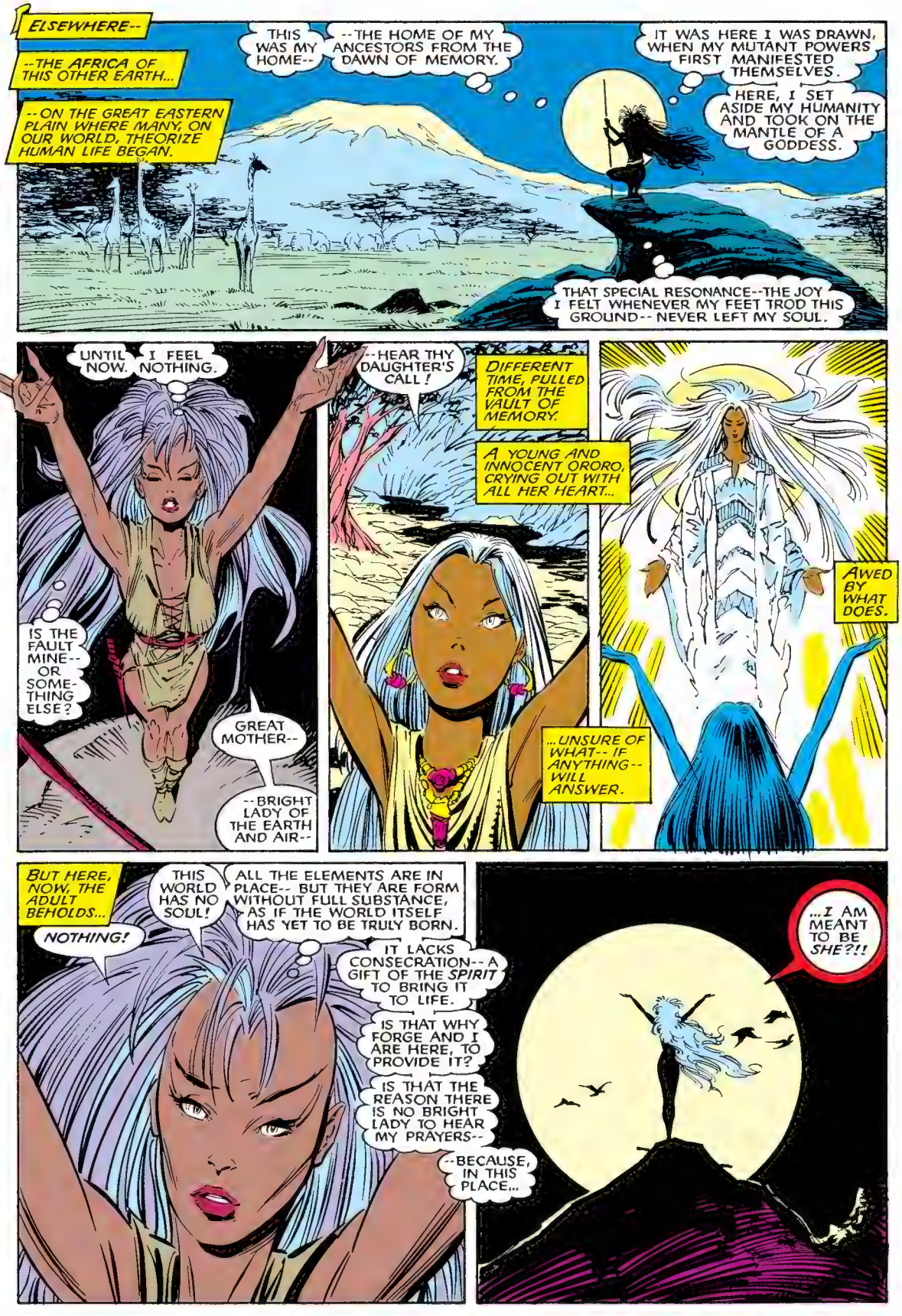

YOUR FUNERAL.
"ZOOM IN ON THE LITTLE GUY, NEAL."
"HIS NAME'S WOLVERINE, MANOLI.
"ONE OF THE X-MEN."
HE'S A WILD MAN.
THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIM AND THE WARRIORS HE'S FIGHTING.
SURE THERE IS, PARTNER.
HE'S ON OUR SIDE.
GREAT--FOR AS LONG AS THAT LASTS.
SUPPOSE SOMEONE MAKES HIM A BETTER OFFER?
CBS
abc
NBC
THESE SELF-PROCLAIMED SUPER HEROES PROTECT HUMANITY FROM "SUPER VILLAINS".
BUT, NEAL, WHO PROTECTS US FROM OUR HEROES?
IS THAT A QUESTION TO ASK...
..WHEN HE'S BLEEDING INSTEAD OF US?
YOU REALLY BELIEVE IN THESE X-MEN, DON'T'CHA, PAL?
POLICE
IT'S THEIR WORLD, TOO.
THEY DESERVE AS MUCH FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS AS ANYONE ELSE.
WHY SHOULD WE FEAR THEM SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY'RE DIFFERENT FROM US?
THAT DIFFERENCE IS THEIR POWERS.
AND POWER CORRUPTS.
IS ANYONE RECEIVING OUR TRANSMISSION, MANOLI?
OR ARE WE WASTING OUR TIME?
I THINK IT'S SAFE TO SAY, KEMO SABE, WITHOUT EXAGGERATION...
...THAT THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING.

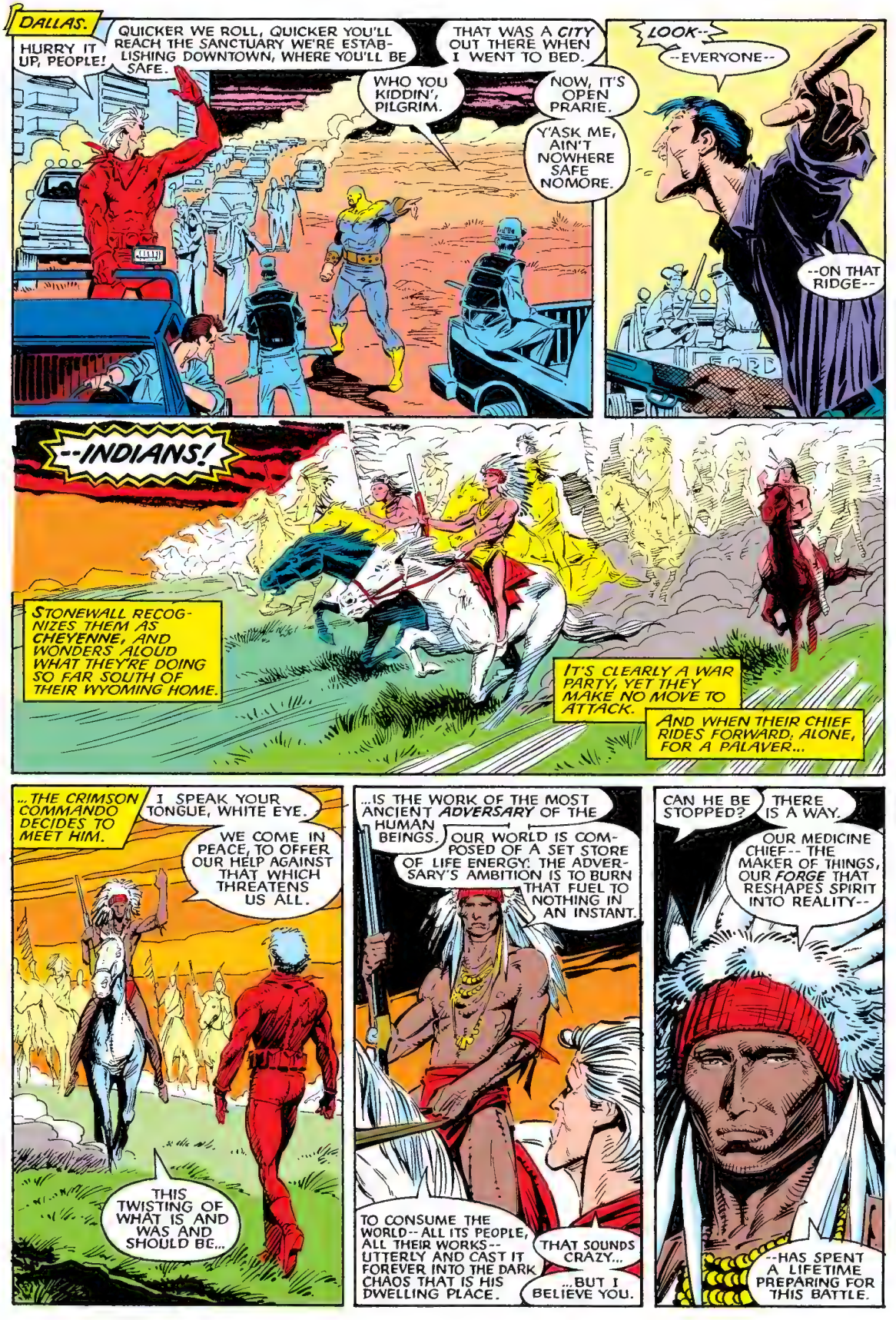

ELSEWHERE--
--THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, NEAR WHAT IN OUR WORLD WOULD BE THE VALLEY OF THE YELLOWSTONE, WYOMING...
FORGE--
--YOUR MOUNTAIN OF POWER--
--DESTROYED!
I SUSPECTED AS MUCH.
BUT I HAD TO SEE FOR MYSELF.
THE ADVERSARY'S VERY THOROUGH, VERY CAREFUL.
PROBABLY THE SAME ON ALL THE EARTHS THERE ARE.
FORGIVE ME, LITTLE FLOWER...
...BUT I HAVE TO BE CERTAIN.
SEE? THE POWER OF THIS NEXUS STILL EXISTS-- BUT IT'S BEEN TAINTED, TWISTED INTO A FORCE INIMICAL TO LIFE. ANYONE WHO TRIES TO DRAW ON IT, ENDS UP THE SAME.
THE ADVERSARY KNOWS I'M CRIPPLED-- THAT THERE MOST LIKELY ISN'T A BLESSED THING I CAN DO TO HIM-- BUT HE ISN'T ABOUT TO TAKE THE RISK.
HE WANTS US IN THE GAME-- THAT'S WHY WE'RE STILL ALIVE-- BUT ON HIS TERMS, AS HIS PAWNS.
WAS NAŻE SUCH A PAWN? WAS THAT WHY HE BETRAYED YOU THROUGH ME?
I'LL LAY ODDS THE NAŻE I KNEW-- MY FATHER-FRIEND, MY TEACHER-- NO LONGER EXISTS, PROBABLY HASN'T FOR QUITE A WHILE.
AT BEST, HE'S BEEN POSSESSED BY THE ADVERSARY.
AT WORST, HE'S THE CHAOS-LORD'S HUMAN AVATAR.
A GOD MADE FLESH.
AND WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
DEPENDS.
FORGE, I AM IN NO MOOD FOR GAMES!

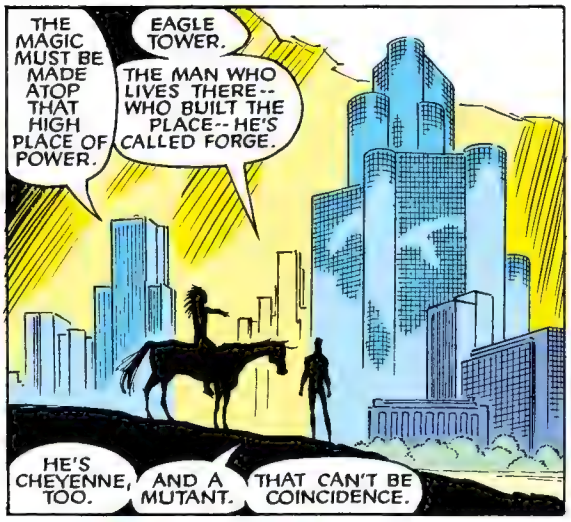

THAT'S JUST THE POINT--
--TO THE ADVERSARY, ALL THIS IS NO MORE THAN A GAME, THE GREATEST EVER PLAYED.
THAT'S WHY HE LOVES CHAOS-- UPSETS THE RULES, MAKES THE GAME MORE CHALLENGING, THE VICTORY... I SUPPOSE... MORE SWEET.
AND-- WHAT OF THOSE SACRIFICED ALONG THE WAY?
DOES A CHILD CARE ABOUT HIS TOYS?
THAT IS OBSCENE!
PERHAPS.
FOR ALL YOUR STRENGTH, STORM--
BUT THERE'S NO DENYING HIS POWER.
--OF WILL, OF PURPOSE, EVEN OF FAITH--
--HE GOT TO YOU.
HE MADE YOU DO HIS BIDDING.
TRICKS, LIES, DECEPTION-- THEY'RE MEAT AND DRINK TO HIM.
THE MORE NOBLE HIS FOE, THE MORE FIERCELY EAGER HE IS TO TEAR THEM DOWN.
BUT THAT'S BEHIND US NOW-- IT DOESN'T MATTER ANYMORE.
WE'RE OUT OF IT HERE.
WHATEVER HAPPENS ON THAT OTHER EARTH, WE'RE SAFE.
WE'RE TOGETHER.
WE CAN BEGIN AGAIN.
THAT "OTHER EARTH" IS HOME!
HOME IS WHERE YOUR HEART IS.
MINE'S WITH YOU.
WHERE'S YOURS?
I...
...CANNOT SAY.
YOU TALK SO SWEETLY--
--BUT SO DID NAŻE...
...AND WITH MUCH THE SAME WORDS.
YOU ASK FOR A TRUST I WILL NOT GIVE.
I HAVE PATHS YET TO WALK, FORGE.
ANSWERS TO FIND. ABOUT THIS WORLD. ABOUT MYSELF.
IT IS A QUEST I MUST UNDERTAKE...
...ALONE.
I UNDERSTAND.
MORE THAN YOU KNOW, WIND-RIDER.
THIS SANCTUARY IS A TRAP-- BUT YOU HAVE TO DISCOVER THAT FOR YOURSELF.
AND WHEN-- IF-- YOU DO, OUR ADVERSARY MAY WELL DISCOVER...
...THAT HIS PRECIOUS PAWNS HAVE TRANSFORMED THEMSELVES...
...INTO QUEENS!

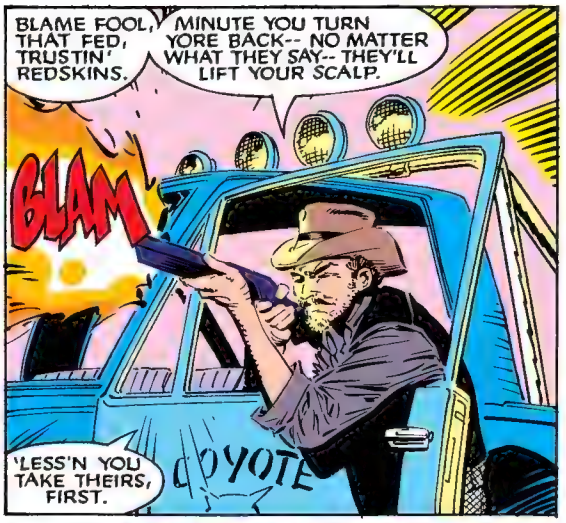

DALLAS... EAGLE PLAZA...
HEAR MY THOUGHTS.
YOU ARE AMONG FRIENDS. THERE IS NO MORE NEED TO BE AFRAID.
AVALANCHE--
--FOLLOW ME WITH THOSE SUPPLIES.
MORE PEOPLE COMIN', MYSTIQUE.
WHERE WE GONNA PUT 'EM ALL?
WE'LL MANAGE, ROGUE.
YOU WERE SAYING, MA'AM?
BASICALLY, WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THOSE CITIZENS UNAFFECTED BY THE TIME-WAVES.
AFTERWARDS, IF POSSIBLE, WE'LL TRY TO DETERMINE WHO OR WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE...
...AND PUT THINGS RIGHT.
YOU'RE VERY CONFI-DENT.
I PREFER, REALISTIC.
HOW IS IT YOU'RE WORK-ING WITH THE X-MEN, CONSIDERING THAT ONE OF FREEDOM FORCE'S PRIMARY MISSIONS IS TO TAKE THOSE OUTLAW MUTANTS INTO FEDERAL CUSTODY?
LISTEN, LADY, IF THE X-MEN WERE THE CROOKS EVERY-ONE LIKES TO FIGURE US FOR, WE WOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE!
ANYBODY WITH SENSE WOULD HAVE SKIPPED TOWN AT THE FIRST SIGN OF TROUBLE.
BUT WE'VE BEEN GOOD GUYS-- WHAT YOU MEDIA TYPES DUB "SUPER HEROES"-- FROM DAY ONE!
RISKING OUR NECKS IS A HABIT AND SAVING THE WORLD, OUR SPECIALTY-- WE'VE DONE BOTH TOO OFTEN TO COUNT, AND PAID THE PRICE--
--THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THAT, THIS TIME...
...YOUR CAMERA LETS FOLKS WATCH ON TV.
WELL, I HOPE TO BLAZES THEY ENJOY THE SHOW!
I COULDN'T HAVE PUT THINGS BETTER MYSELF.
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US...
...WE HAVE WORK TO DO.
WAY TO GO, X-MEN.
THAT'S TELLING THE WORLD!


MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE CROWDED PLAZA...
BE BRAVE, DAZZLER.
SPIRAL'S SPELLS WILL SOON HAVE YOU FREE.
MOST ASSUREDLY, PSI-WITCH!
WHAT WAS SIMPLY DONE...
...CAN BE AS EASILY...
...UNDONE--?!!?
WHAT'S WRONG?!
DON'T KNOW!
GROWING AIR OF CHAOS ABOUT THIS ACCURSED PLACE, PERHAPS.
TWISTING MY MAGIC DANCE...
...TO KEEP IT FROM WOUHRKKK!
WHY DO I NOT BELIEVE YOU, SPIRAL?
TRUTH! I... TRIED!
TRY HARDER.
THIS-- gigk-- IS NOT-- krglk-- MY FAULT!
COLOSSUS-- LET HER GO.
I CAN SENSE-- IN THE TANGLED LABYRINTH OF HER THOUGHTS--
--THAT SHE'S TELLING THE TRUTH.
SHE'S AS STARTLED AND ALARMED AS WE.
SMALL COMFORT.
HOWEVER--THREATEN AN X-MAN AGAIN, SPIRAL, AND YOU WILL ANSWER TO ME.
AND WE WILL DISCOVER WHETHER MAGIC IS A MATCH FOR MY ARMORED FORM.
SOMEDAY, STRIPLING, WE MUST PUT THAT TO THE TEST.
PERHAPS SO-- AND FAR SOONER...
...THAN EITHER OF US SUSPECTS.

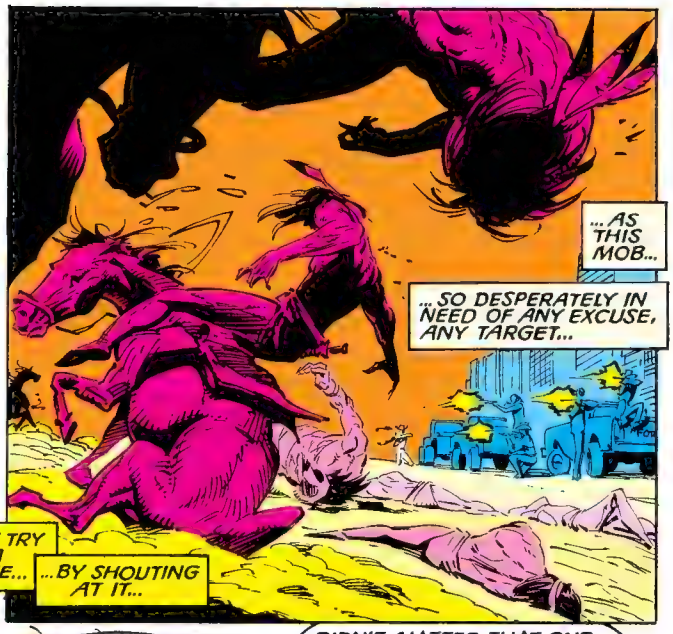

ELSEWHERE--
--THE AFRICA OF THIS OTHER EARTH...
--ON THE GREAT EASTERN PLAIN WHERE MANY, ON OUR WORLD, THEORIZE HUMAN LIFE BEGAN.
THIS WAS MY HOME--
--THE HOME OF MY ANCESTORS FROM THE DAWN OF MEMORY.
IT WAS HERE I WAS DRAWN, WHEN MY MUTANT POWERS FIRST MANIFESTED THEMSELVES.
HERE, I SET ASIDE MY HUMANITY AND TOOK ON THE MANTLE OF A GODDESS.
THAT SPECIAL RESONANCE--THE JOY I FELT WHENEVER MY FEET TROD THIS GROUND-- NEVER LEFT MY SOUL.
UNTIL NOW, I FEEL NOTHING.
IS THE FAULT MINE-- OR SOME-THING ELSE?
GREAT MOTHER--
--BRIGHT LADY OF THE EARTH AND AIR--
--HEAR THY DAUGHTER'S CALL!
DIFFERENT TIME, PULLED FROM THE VAULT OF MEMORY.
A YOUNG AND INNOCENT ORORO, CRYING OUT WITH ALL HER HEART...
...UNSURE OF WHAT-- IF ANYTHING-- WILL ANSWER.
AWED BY WHAT DOES.
BUT HERE, NOW, THE ADULT BEHOLDS...
NOTHING!
THIS WORLD HAS NO SOUL!
ALL THE ELEMENTS ARE IN PLACE-- BUT THEY ARE FORM WITHOUT FULL SUBSTANCE, AS IF THE WORLD ITSELF HAS YET TO BE TRULY BORN.
IT LACKS CONSECRATION-- A GIFT OF THE SPIRIT TO BRING IT TO LIFE.
IS THAT WHY FORGE AND I ARE HERE, TO PROVIDE IT?
IS THAT THE REASON THERE IS NO BRIGHT LADY TO HEAR MY PRAYERS--
--BECAUSE, IN THIS PLACE...
...I AM MEANT TO BE SHE?!!


DALLAS.
HURRY IT UP, PEOPLE!
QUICKER WE ROLL, QUICKER YOU'LL REACH THE SANCTUARY WE'RE ESTABLISHING DOWNTOWN, WHERE YOU'LL BE SAFE.
THAT WAS A CITY OUT THERE WHEN I WENT TO BED.
WHO YOU KIDDIN', PILGRIM.
NOW, IT'S OPEN PRARIE.
Y'ASK ME, AIN'T NOWHERE SAFE NOMORE.
LOOK--
--EVERYONE--
--ON THAT RIDGE--
--INDIANS!
STONEWALL RECOGNIZES THEM AS CHEYENNE, AND WONDERS ALOUD WHAT THEY'RE DOING SO FAR SOUTH OF THEIR WYOMING HOME.
IT'S CLEARLY A WAR PARTY, YET THEY MAKE NO MOVE TO ATTACK.
AND WHEN THEIR CHIEF RIDES FORWARD, ALONE, FOR A PALAVER...
...THE CRIMSON COMMANDO DECIDES TO MEET HIM.
I SPEAK YOUR TONGUE, WHITE EYE.
WE COME IN PEACE, TO OFFER OUR HELP AGAINST THAT WHICH THREATENS US ALL.
THIS TWISTING OF WHAT IS AND WAS AND SHOULD BE...
...IS THE WORK OF THE MOST ANCIENT ADVERSARY OF THE HUMAN BEINGS.
OUR WORLD IS COMPOSED OF A SET STORE OF LIFE ENERGY. THE ADVERSARY'S AMBITION IS TO BURN THAT FUEL TO NOTHING IN AN INSTANT.
TO CONSUME THE WORLD--ALL ITS PEOPLE, ALL THEIR WORKS--UTTERLY AND CAST IT FOREVER INTO THE DARK CHAOS THAT IS HIS DWELLING PLACE.
THAT SOUNDS CRAZY...
...BUT I BELIEVE YOU.
CAN HE BE STOPPED?
THERE IS A WAY.
OUR MEDICINE CHIEF--THE MAKER OF THINGS, OUR FORGE THAT RESHAPES SPIRIT INTO REALITY--
--HAS SPENT A LIFETIME PREPARING FOR THIS BATTLE.

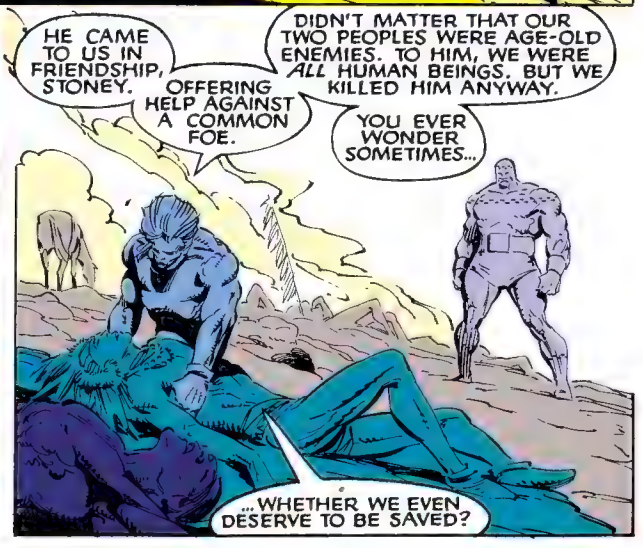

THE MAGIC MUST BE MADE ATOP THAT HIGH PLACE OF POWER.
EAGLE TOWER.
THE MAN WHO LIVES THERE-- WHO BUILT THE PLACE-- HE'S CALLED FORGE.
HE'S CHEYENNE, TOO.
AND A MUTANT.
THAT CAN'T BE COINCIDENCE.


BLAME FOOL, THAT FED, TRUSTIN' REDSKINS.
MINUTE YOU TURN YORE BACK-- NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAY-- THEY'LL LIFT YOUR SCALP.
BLAM
'LESS'N YOU TAKE THEIRS, FIRST.
COYOTE

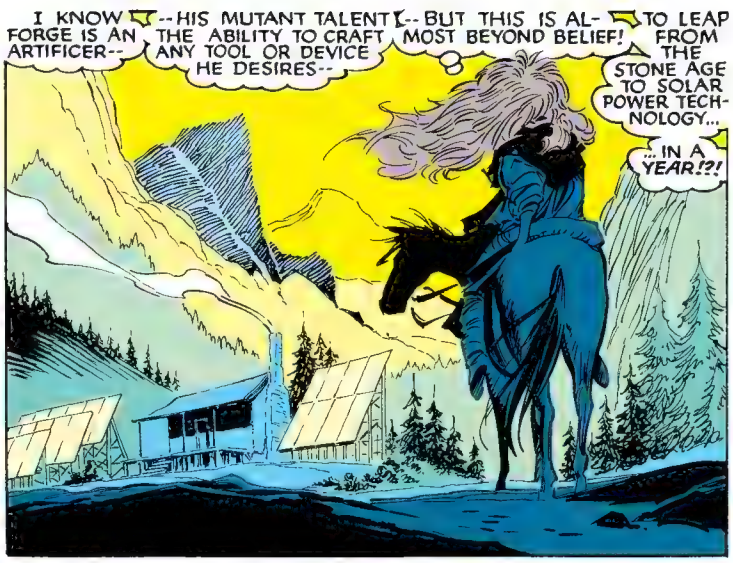
I KNOW NOT OF WHOM YOU SPAK
NO!
WHO FIRED--?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! FOR THE LOVE OF HEAVEN--
--STOP SHOOTING!
AS EASILY TRY TO STOP A HURRICANE...
...BY SHOUTING AT IT...

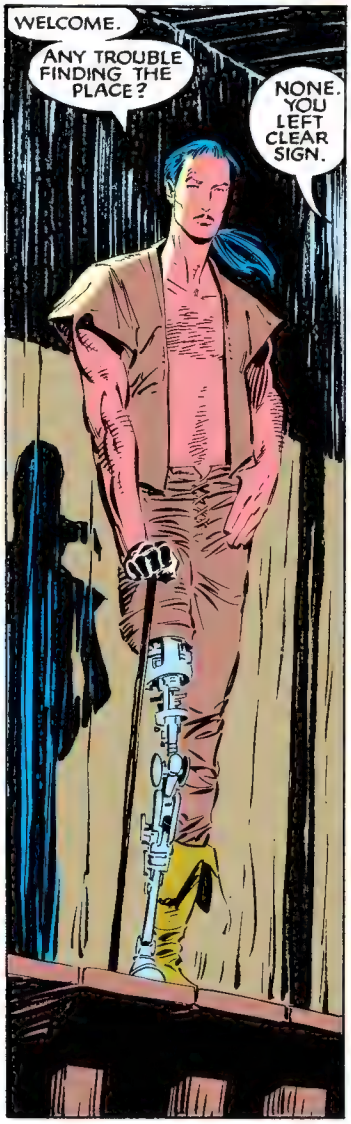

...AS THIS MOB...
...SO DESPERATELY IN NEED OF ANY EXCUSE, ANY TARGET...

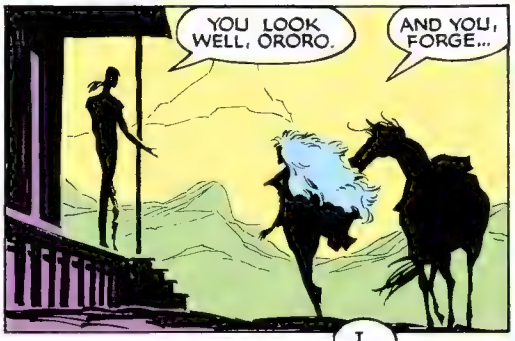
...ON WHICH TO VENT THEIR FEAR.
WAY TO GO, BOYS, THAT SHOWED 'EM!
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS...
...AT LEAST WE GOT OUR LICKS IN!

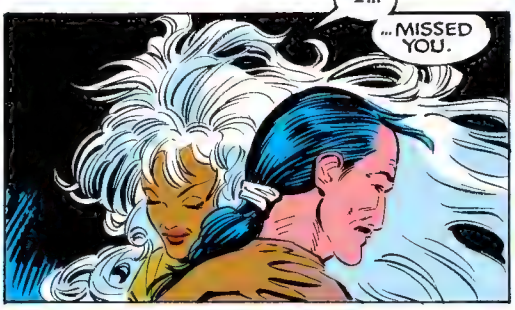

HE CAME TO US IN FRIENDSHIP, STONEY.
OFFERING HELP AGAINST A COMMON FOE.
DIDN'T MATTER THAT OUR TWO PEOPLES WERE AGE-OLD ENEMIES. TO HIM, WE WERE ALL HUMAN BEINGS. BUT WE KILLED HIM ANYWAY.
YOU EVER WONDER SOMETIMES...
...WHETHER WE EVEN DESERVE TO BE SAVED?

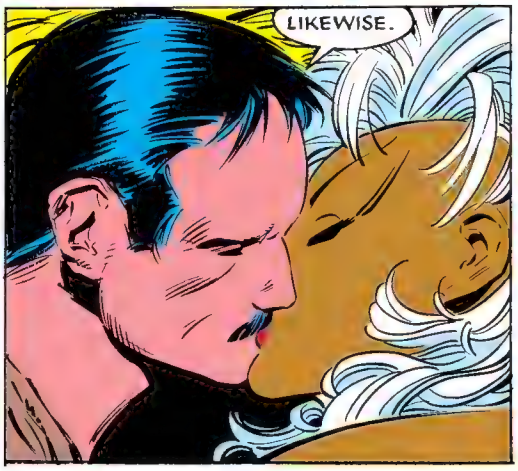
ELSEWHERE...
BY THE STARS!?!


I KNOW FORGE IS AN ARTIFICER--
--HIS MUTANT TALENT THE ABILITY TO CRAFT ANY TOOL OR DEVICE HE DESIRES--
--BUT THIS IS ALMOST BEYOND BELIEF!
TO LEAP FROM THE STONE AGE TO SOLAR POWER TECHNOLOGY...
...IN A YEAR!?!

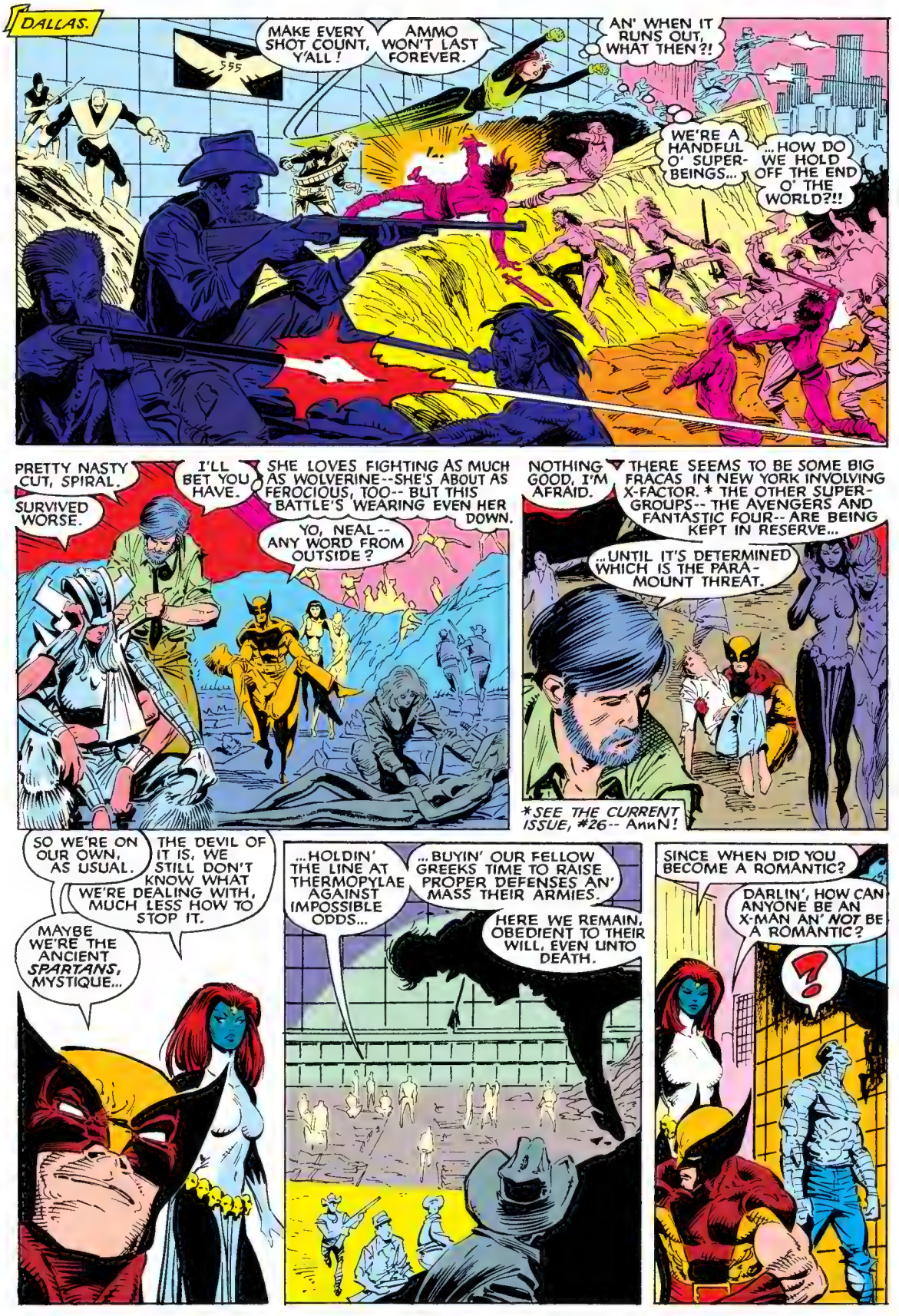

WELCOME.
ANY TROUBLE FINDING THE PLACE?
NONE. YOU LEFT CLEAR SIGN.

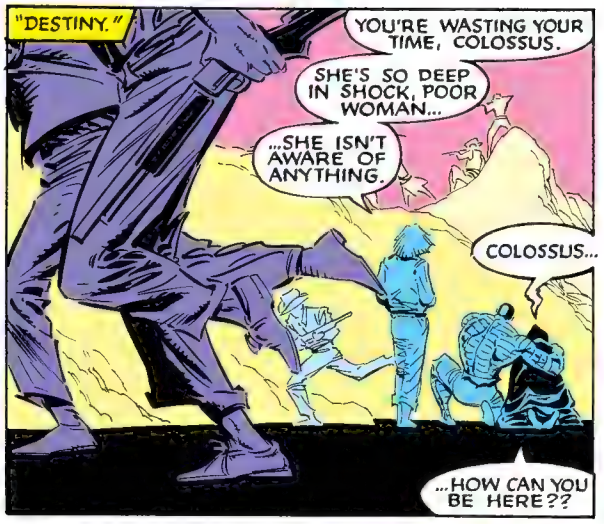

YOU LOOK WELL, ORORO.
AND YOU, FORGE...

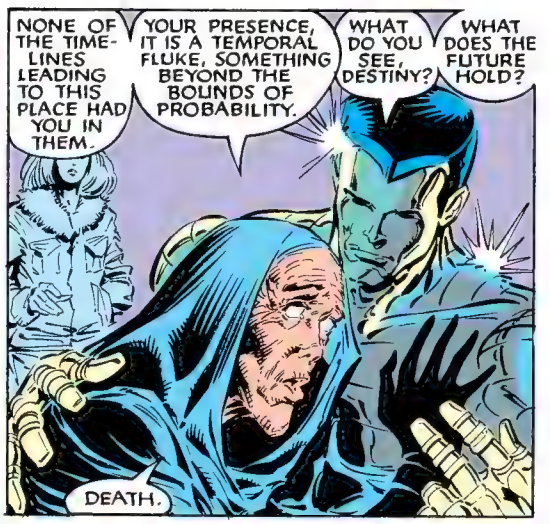

I...
...MISSED YOU.

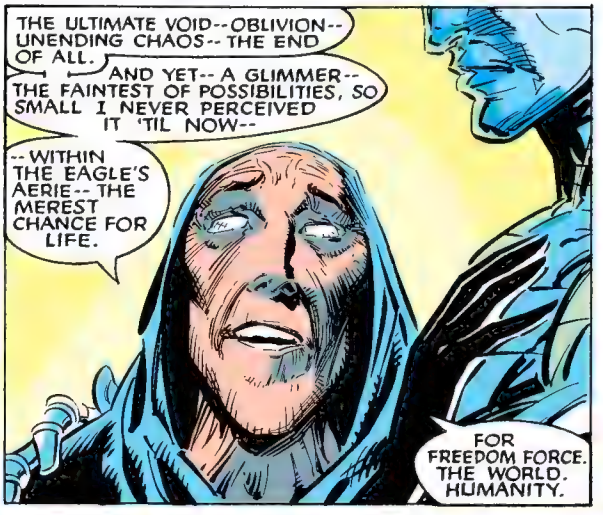

LIKEWISE.

SO-- YOU FIND THOSE ANSWERS YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?
I BELIEVE SO. IN SOME WAYS, I WISH I HAD NOT.
YOUR ADVERSARY IS THE CRUELEST OF JESTERS, AND THIS THE RICHEST OF PRISONS.
THAT'S HIS NATURE-- TO OFFER WHAT YOU MOST DESIRE...
...AND MAKE YOU PAY ACCORDINGLY.
AND WHAT IS OUR NATURE, FORGE?
THAT, SWEETHEART, IS WHAT WE'RE HERE TO DECIDE.


DALLAS.
555
MAKE EVERY SHOT COUNT, Y'ALL!
AMMO WON'T LAST FOREVER.
AN' WHEN IT RUNS OUT, WHAT THEN?!
WE'RE A HANDFUL O' SUPER-BEINGS...
...HOW DO WE HOLD OFF THE END O' THE WORLD?!!
PRETTY NASTY CUT, SPIRAL.
I'LL BET YOU HAVE.
SURVIVED WORSE.
SHE LOVES FIGHTING AS MUCH AS WOLVERINE--SHE'S ABOUT AS FEROCIOUS, TOO-- BUT THIS BATTLE'S WEARING EVEN HER DOWN.
YO, NEAL-- ANY WORD FROM OUTSIDE?
NOTHING GOOD, I'M AFRAID.
THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME BIG FRACAS IN NEW YORK INVOLVING X-FACTOR. * THE OTHER SUPER-GROUPS-- THE AVENGERS AND FANTASTIC FOUR-- ARE BEING KEPT IN RESERVE...
...UNTIL IT'S DETERMINED WHICH IS THE PARA-MOUNT THREAT.
*SEE THE CURRENT ISSUE, #26-- AnnN!
SO WE'RE ON OUR OWN, AS USUAL.
THE DEVIL OF IT IS, WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH, MUCH LESS HOW TO STOP IT.
MAYBE WE'RE THE ANCIENT SPARTANS, MYSTIQUE...
...HOLDIN' THE LINE AT THERMOPYLAE AGAINST IMPOSSIBLE ODDS...
...BUYIN' OUR FELLOW GREEKS TIME TO RAISE PROPER DEFENSES AN' MASS THEIR ARMIES.
HERE WE REMAIN, OBEDIENT TO THEIR WILL, EVEN UNTO DEATH.
SINCE WHEN DID YOU BECOME A ROMANTIC?
DARLIN', HOW CAN ANYONE BE AN X-MAN AN' NOT BE A ROMANTIC?
?

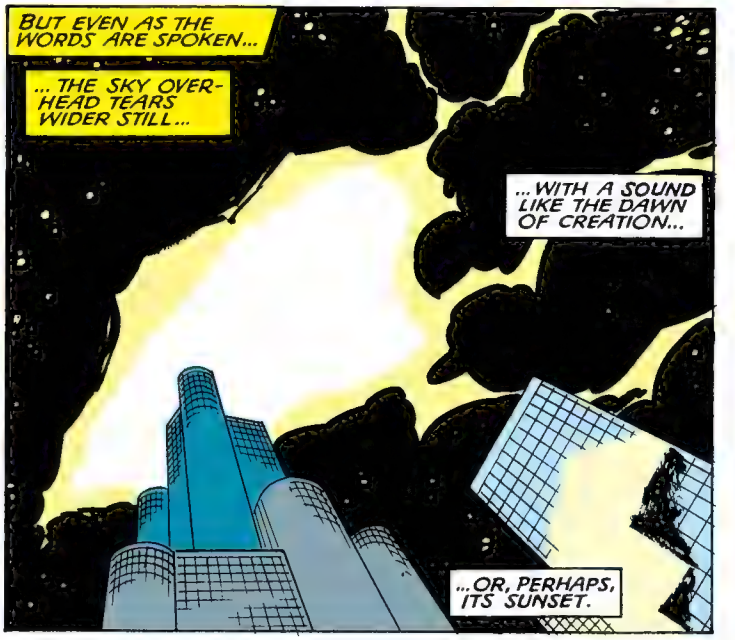

"DESTINY."
YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME, COLOSSUS.
SHE'S SO DEEP IN SHOCK, POOR WOMAN...
...SHE ISN'T AWARE OF ANYTHING.
COLOSSUS...
...HOW CAN YOU BE HERE??

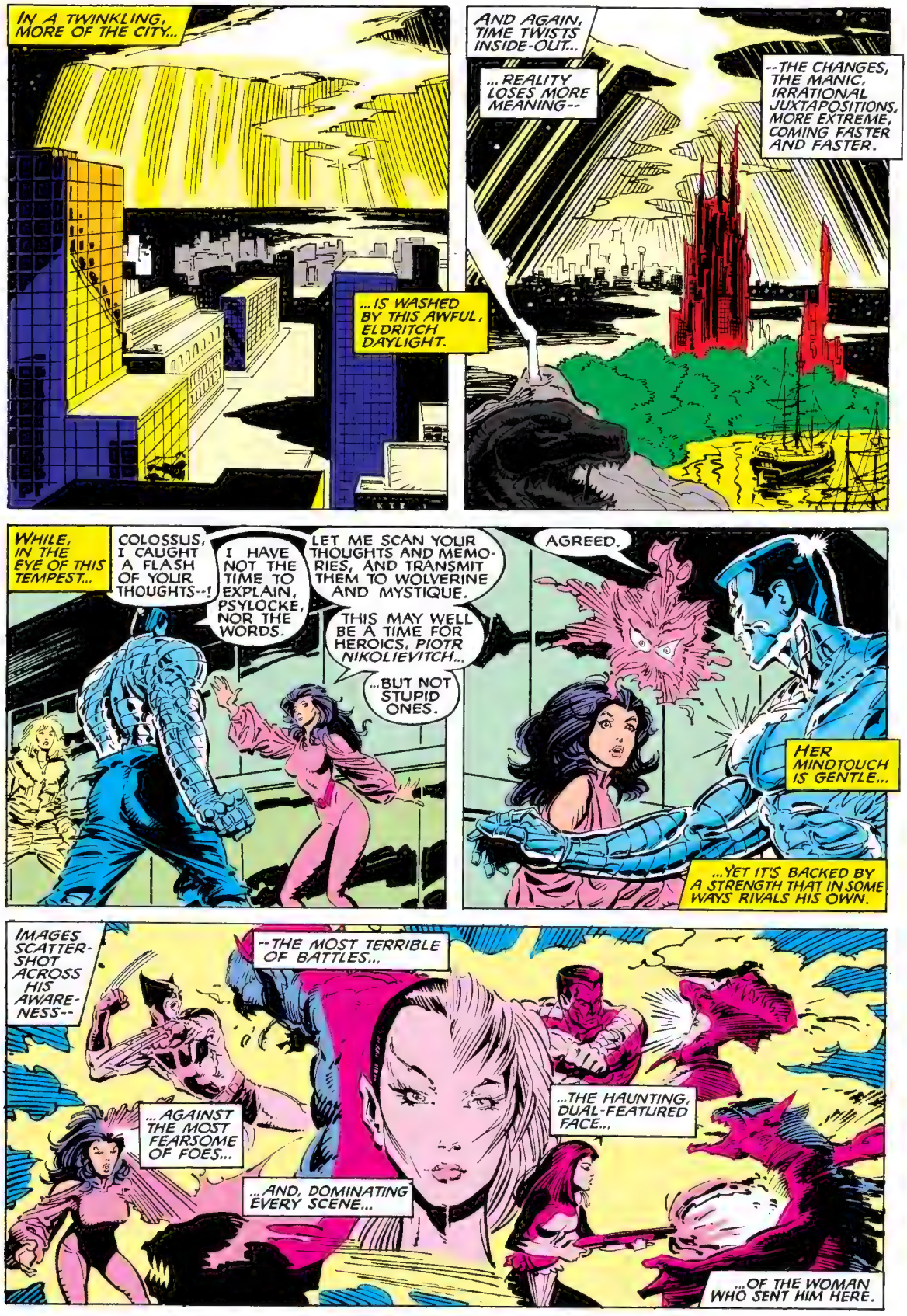

NONE OF THE TIME-LINES LEADING TO THIS PLACE HAD YOU IN THEM.
YOUR PRESENCE, IT IS A TEMPORAL FLUKE, SOMETHING BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF PROBABILITY.
WHAT DO YOU SEE, DESTINY?
WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?
DEATH.


THE ULTIMATE VOID--OBLIVION--UNENDING CHAOS--THE END OF ALL.
AND YET--A GLIMMER--THE FAINTEST OF POSSIBILITIES, SO SMALL I NEVER PERCEIVED IT 'TIL NOW--
--WITHIN THE EAGLE'S AERIE--THE MEREST CHANCE FOR LIFE.
FOR FREEDOM FORCE. THE WORLD. HUMANITY.

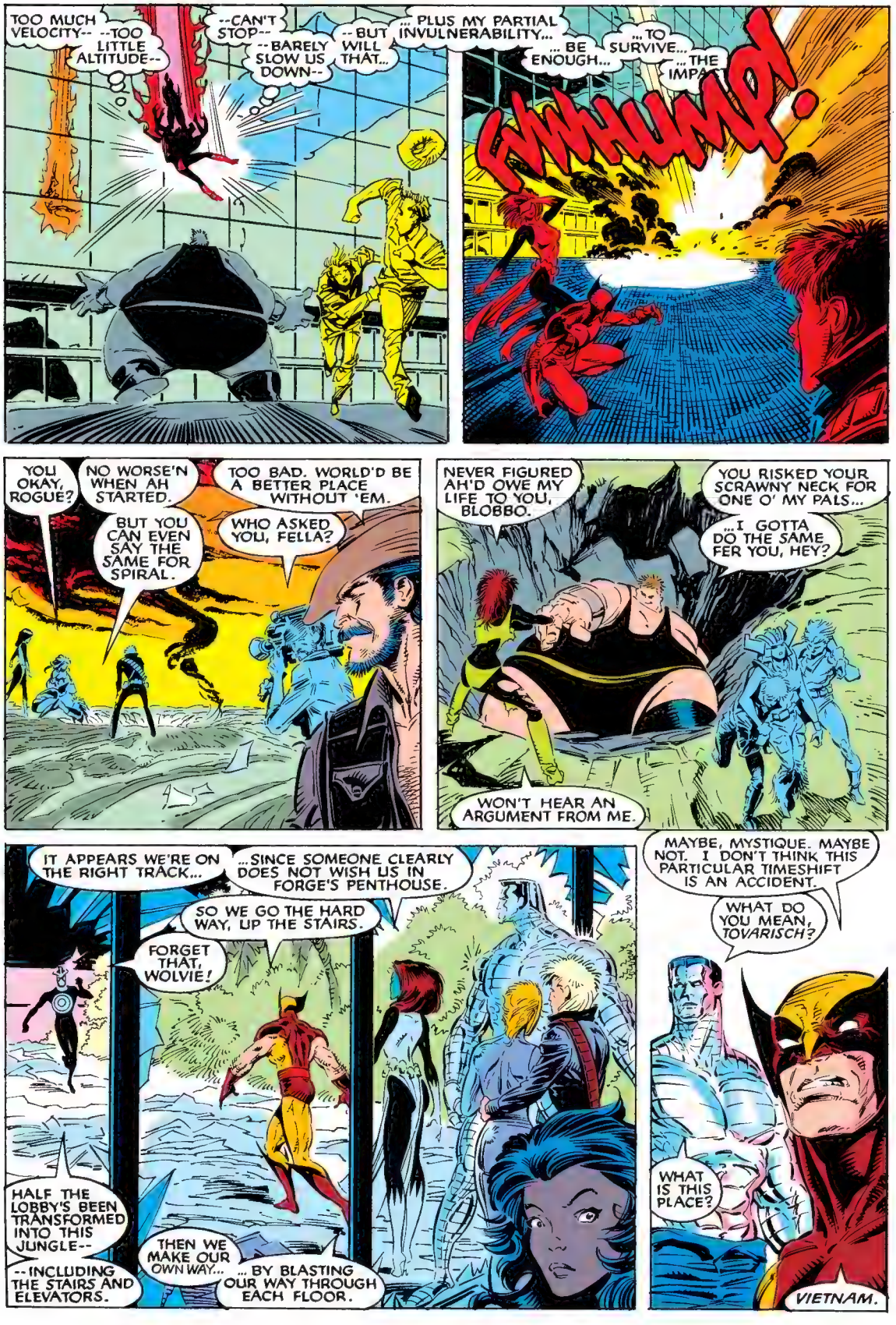
BUT...
...NONE FOR YOU.
Oh, COLOSSUS--MY DEAR BOY--I SEE NOTHING FOR THE X-MEN!
WHATEVER HAPPENS...
...YOUR FATE IS SEALED.

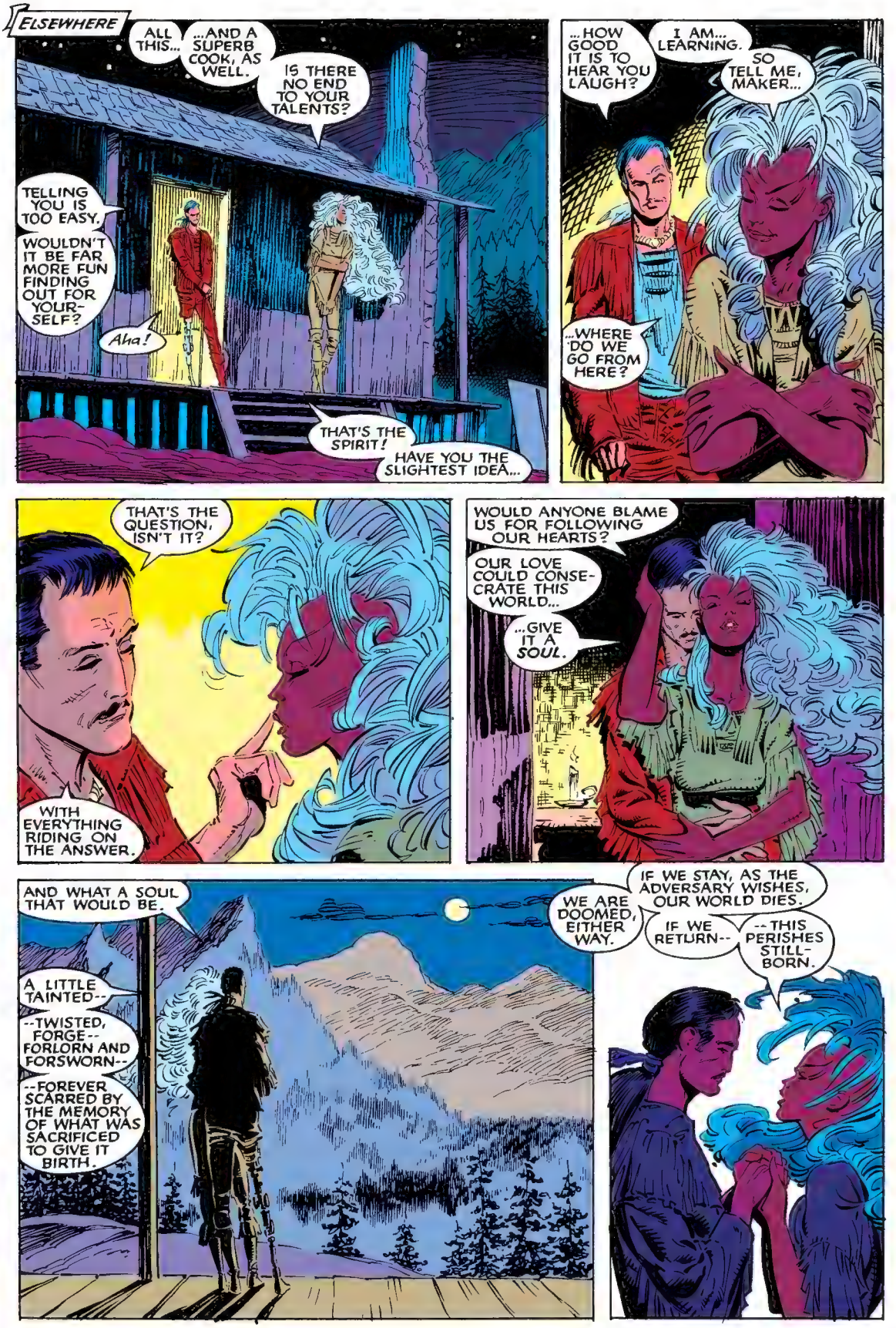
555
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
YOU HEARD HER, MADELYNE. SALVATION, IF IT EXISTS...
... LIES WITHIN.
SHE SAID YOU'RE GOING TO DIE!
DOES NOT EVERYONE?
A FAIR EXCHANGE, I THINK...
...IF OTHERS LIVE.

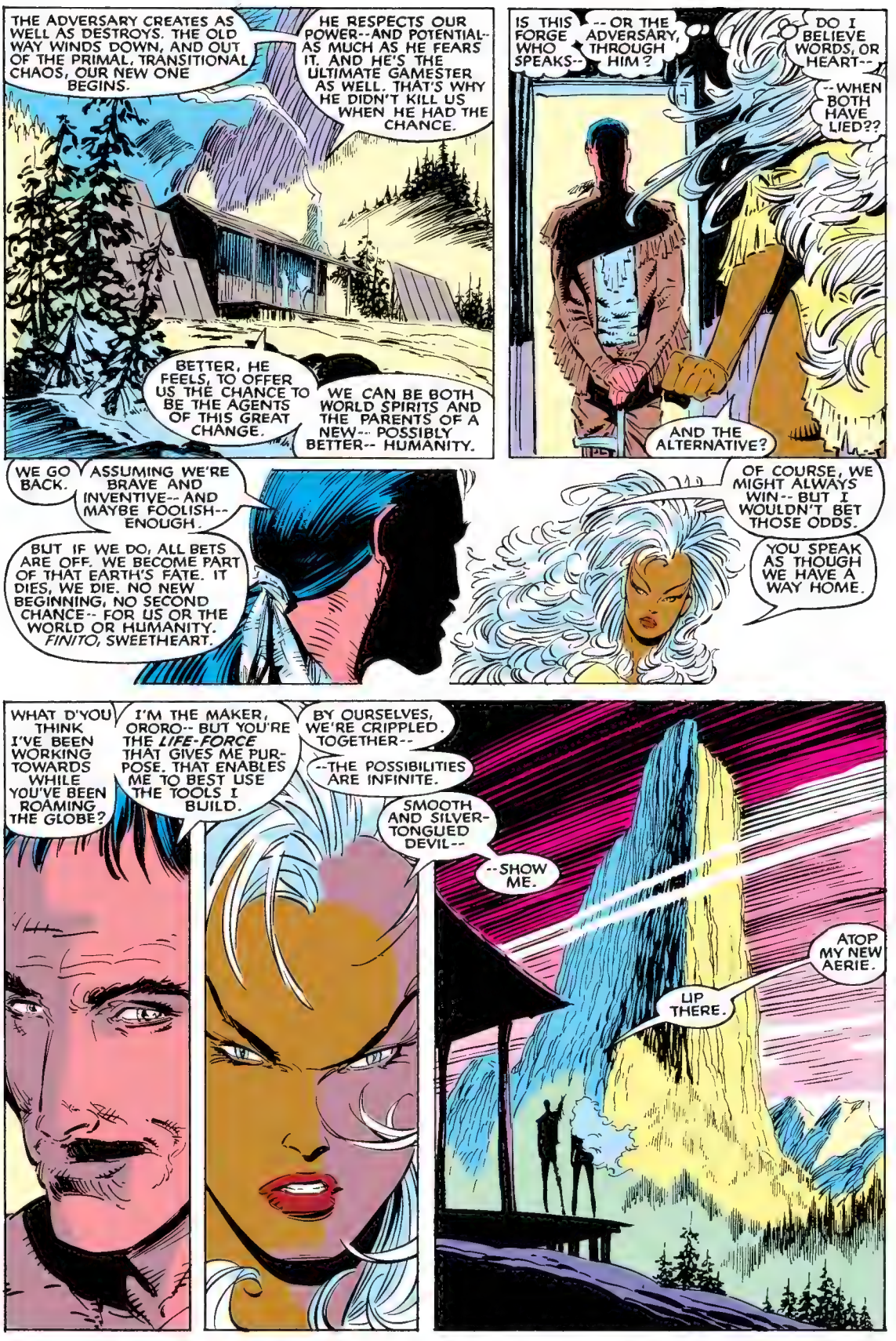

BUT EVEN AS THE WORDS ARE SPOKEN...
... THE SKY OVERHEAD TEARS WIDER STILL...
...WITH A SOUND LIKE THE DAWN OF CREATION...
...OR, PERHAPS, ITS SUNSET.


IN A TWINKLING, MORE OF THE CITY...
...IS WASHED BY THIS AWFUL, ELDRITCH DAYLIGHT.
AND AGAIN, TIME TWISTS INSIDE-OUT...
...REALITY LOSES MORE MEANING--
--THE CHANGES, THE MANIC, IRRATIONAL JUXTAPOSITIONS, MORE EXTREME, COMING FASTER AND FASTER.
WHILE, IN THE EYE OF THIS TEMPEST...
COLOSSUS, I CAUGHT A FLASH OF YOUR THOUGHTS--!
I HAVE NOT THE TIME TO EXPLAIN, PSYLOCKE, NOR THE WORDS.
LET ME SCAN YOUR THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES, AND TRANSMIT THEM TO WOLVERINE AND MYSTIQUE.
THIS MAY WELL BE A TIME FOR HEROICS, PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH...
...BUT NOT STUPID ONES.
AGREED.
HER MINDTOUCH IS GENTLE...
...YET IT'S BACKED BY A STRENGTH THAT IN SOME WAYS RIVALS HIS OWN.
IMAGES SCATTER-SHOT ACROSS HIS AWARE-NESS--
--THE MOST TERRIBLE OF BATTLES...
...AGAINST THE MOST FEARSOME OF FOES...
...AND, DOMINATING EVERY SCENE...
...THE HAUNTING, DUAL-FEATURED FACE...
...OF THE WOMAN WHO SENT HIM HERE.

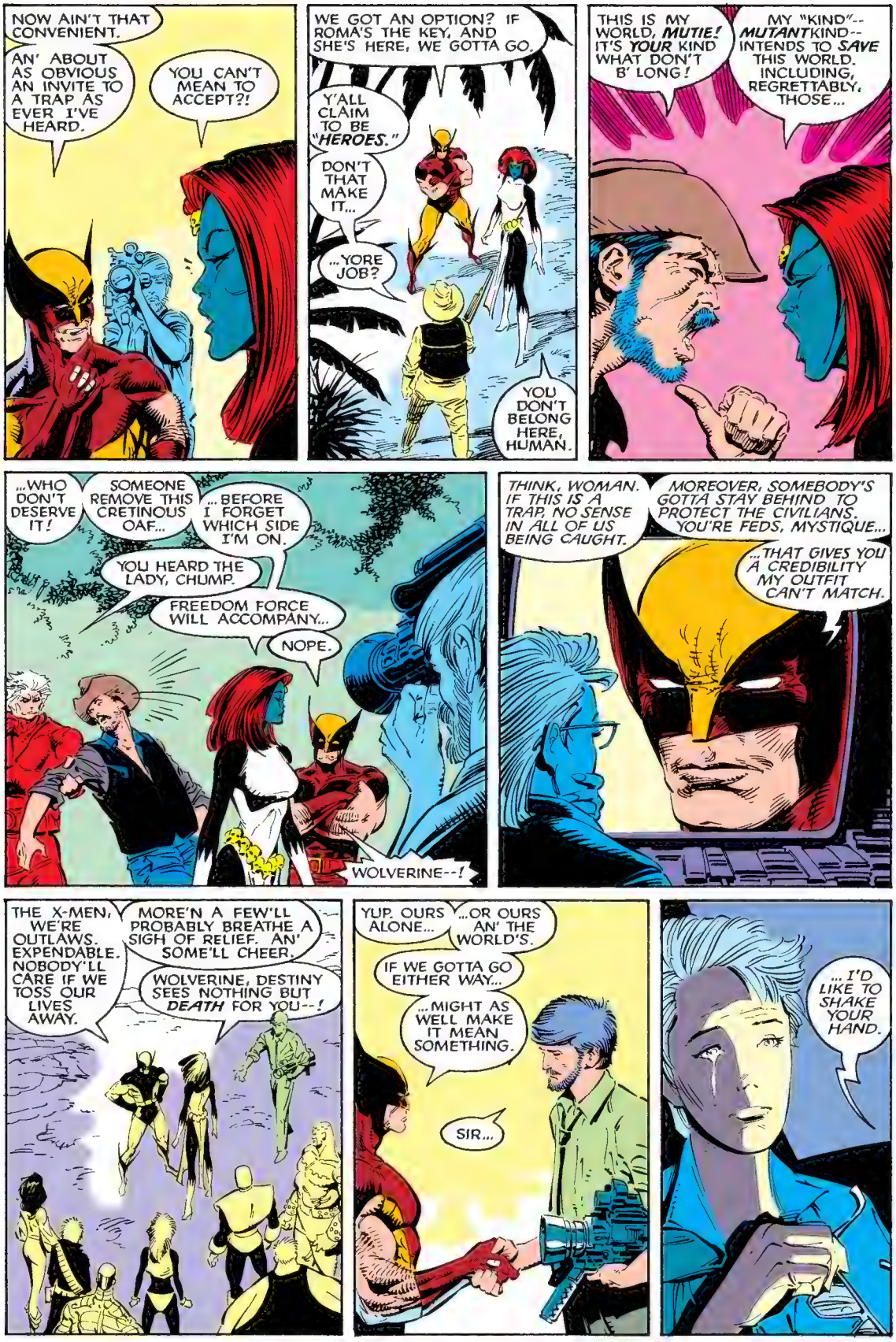
ROMA!?!
YOU--KNOW HER?!
SHE'S THE GUARDIAN OF THE OMNIVERSE, SUPREME CARE-TAKER AND ARBITER OF REALITY.
WELL, REALITY FOR US HAS CLEARLY GONE MAD. IF ROMA IS ITS CARETAKER, THEN SHE IS EITHER THE CAUSE OR ANOTHER VICTIM.
COLOSSUS, SHE'S A GODDESS. SO WHAT IF SHE CONTACTED YOU, HOW DO WE REACH HER?
EVER SINCE I ARRIVED HERE, I HAVE BEEN DRAWN TO FORGE'S AERIE. PERHAPS THAT IS WHERE OUR ANSWERS ARE TO BE FOUND?
BOY MAKES SENSE. ROGUE, RECONNOITER FORGE'S PENT-HOUSE.
SPIRAL, GET THERE FIRST.
DARN!
MYSTIQUE MAY BE MY FOSTER MOM...
...BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN...
...SHE CUTS ME ANY SLACK.
Whoa-oh!
ON T'OTHER HAND...
...MAYBE IT AIN'T SO BAD A THING...
...ARRIVIN' IN SECOND PLACE.
SPIRAL'S COMIN' DOWN LIKE A RUNAWAY ROCKET!
AH HATE HER GUTS--
--SHE DON'T DESERVE MY BEIN' SO NICE...
...PROB'LY LET ME SPLATTER WITHOUT A QUALM--
--BUT AH CAN'T!

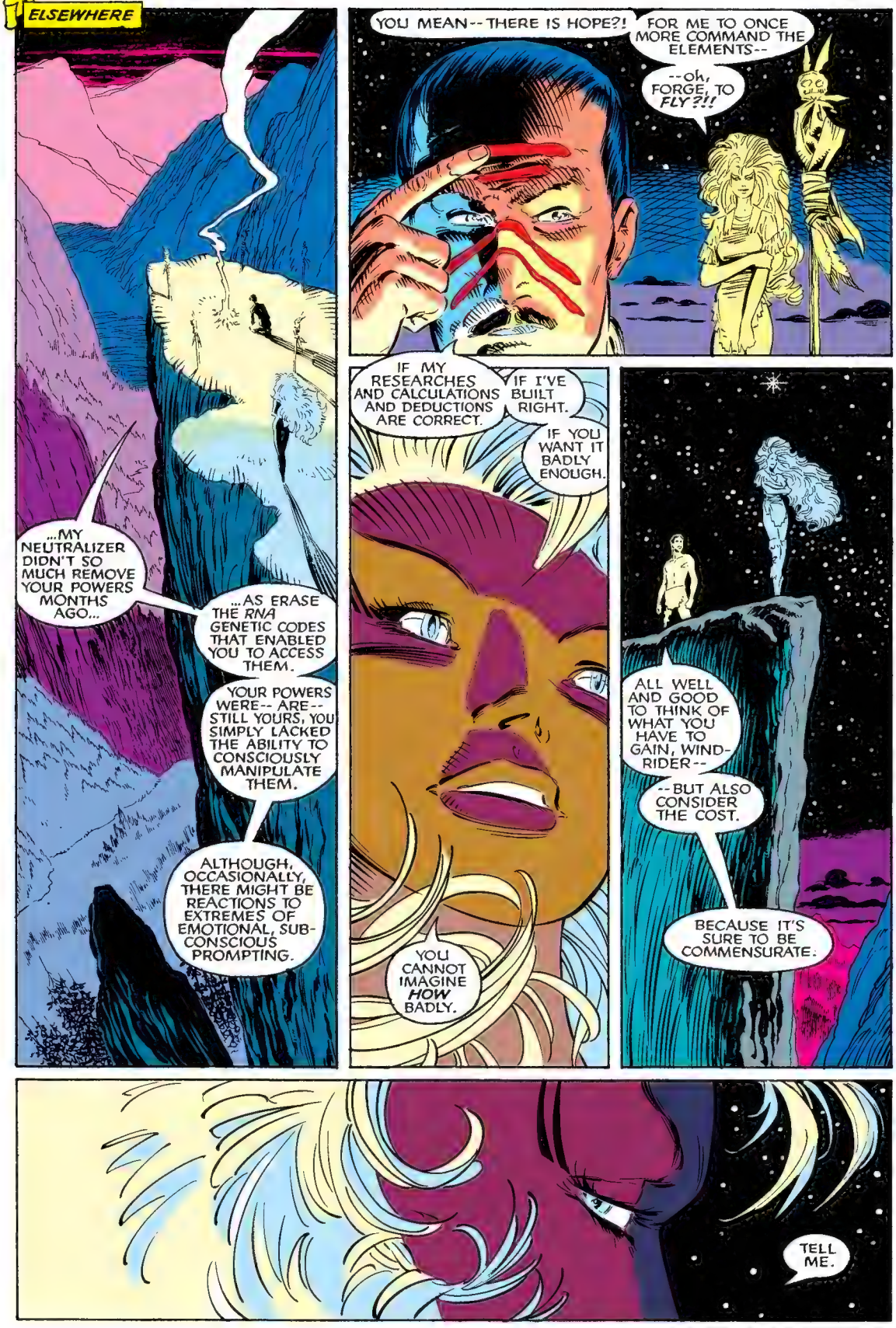

TOO MUCH VELOCITY--
--TOO LITTLE ALTITUDE--
--CAN'T STOP--
--BARELY SLOW US DOWN--
--BUT WILL THAT...
... PLUS MY PARTIAL INVULNERABILITY...
... BE ENOUGH...
...TO SURVIVE...
...THE IMPA
KWHUMP!
YOU OKAY, ROGUE?
NO WORSE'N WHEN AH STARTED.
BUT YOU CAN EVEN SAY THE SAME FOR SPIRAL.
TOO BAD. WORLD'D BE A BETTER PLACE WITHOUT 'EM.
WHO ASKED YOU, FELLA?
NEVER FIGURED AH'D OWE MY LIFE TO YOU, BLOBBO.
YOU RISKED YOUR SCRAWNY NECK FOR ONE O' MY PALS...
...I GOTTA DO THE SAME FER YOU, HEY?
WON'T HEAR AN ARGUMENT FROM ME.
IT APPEARS WE'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK...
...SINCE SOMEONE CLEARLY DOES NOT WISH US IN FORGE'S PENTHOUSE.
SO WE GO THE HARD WAY, UP THE STAIRS.
FORGET THAT, WOLVIE!
HALF THE LOBBY'S BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO THIS JUNGLE--
--INCLUDING THE STAIRS AND ELEVATORS.
THEN WE MAKE OUR OWN WAY...
... BY BLASTING OUR WAY THROUGH EACH FLOOR.
MAYBE, MYSTIQUE. MAYBE NOT. I DON'T THINK THIS PARTICULAR TIMESHIFT IS AN ACCIDENT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, TOVARISCH?
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
VIETNAM.


ELSEWHERE
ALL THIS...
...AND A SUPERB COOK, AS WELL.
IS THERE NO END TO YOUR TALENTS?
TELLING YOU IS TOO EASY.
WOULDN'T IT BE FAR MORE FUN FINDING OUT FOR YOURSELF?
Aha!
THAT'S THE SPIRIT!
HAVE YOU THE SLIGHTEST IDEA...
...HOW GOOD IT IS TO HEAR YOU LAUGH?
I AM... LEARNING.
SO TELL ME, MAKER...
...WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
THAT'S THE QUESTION, ISN'T IT?
WITH EVERYTHING RIDING ON THE ANSWER.
WOULD ANYONE BLAME US FOR FOLLOWING OUR HEARTS?
OUR LOVE COULD CONSECRATE THIS WORLD...
...GIVE IT A SOUL.
AND WHAT A SOUL THAT WOULD BE.
A LITTLE TAINTED--
--TWISTED, FORGE--
FORLORN AND FORSWORN--
--FOREVER SCARRED BY THE MEMORY OF WHAT WAS SACRIFICED TO GIVE IT BIRTH.
WE ARE DOOMED, EITHER WAY.
IF WE STAY, AS THE ADVERSARY WISHES, OUR WORLD DIES.
IF WE RETURN--
--THIS PERISHES STILLBORN.

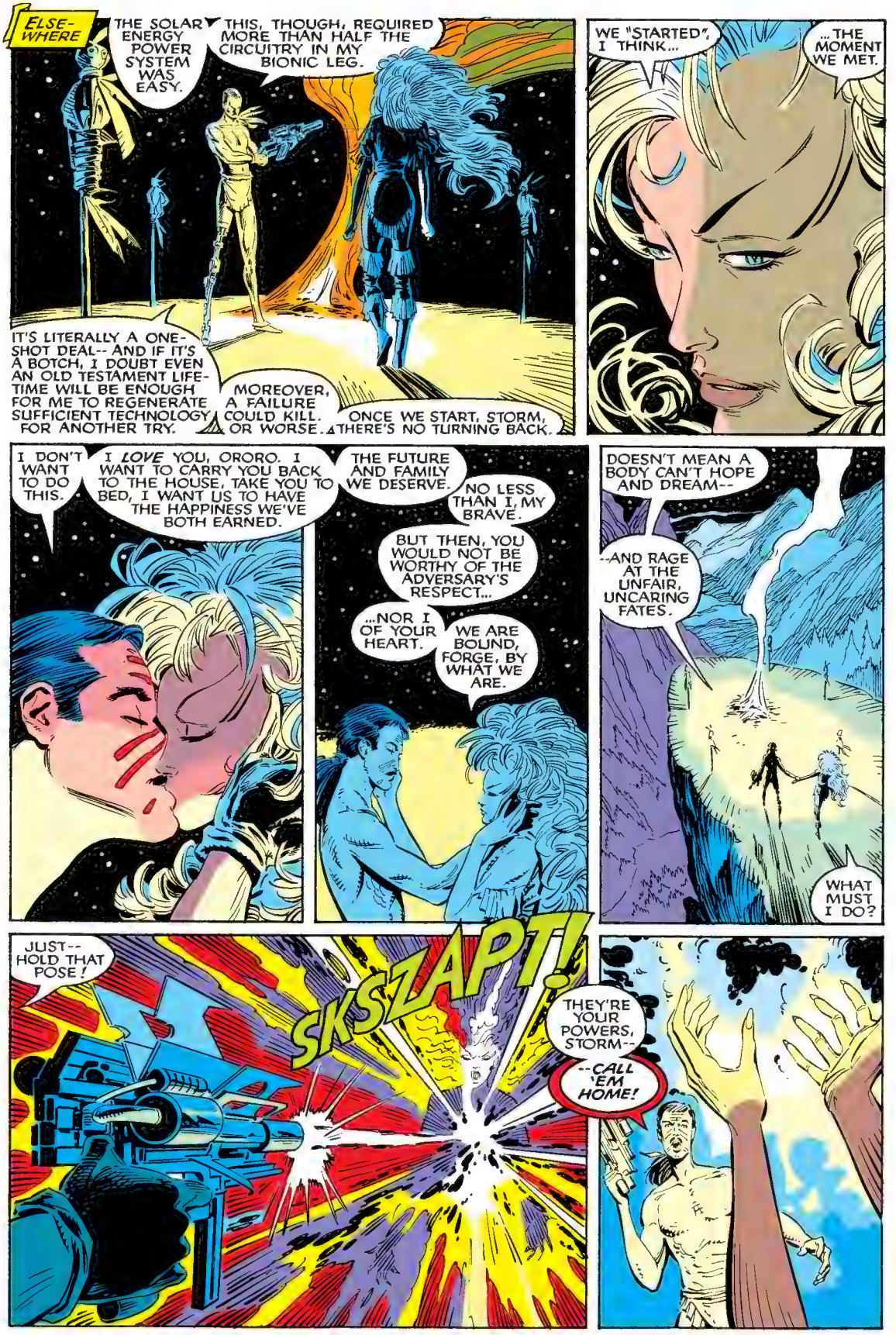

THE ADVERSARY CREATES AS WELL AS DESTROYS. THE OLD WAY WINDS DOWN, AND OUT OF THE PRIMAL, TRANSITIONAL CHAOS, OUR NEW ONE BEGINS.
HE RESPECTS OUR POWER--AND POTENTIAL--AS MUCH AS HE FEARS IT. AND HE'S THE ULTIMATE GAMESTER AS WELL. THAT'S WHY HE DIDN'T KILL US WHEN HE HAD THE CHANCE.
BETTER, HE FEELS, TO OFFER US THE CHANCE TO BE THE AGENTS OF THIS GREAT CHANGE.
WE CAN BE BOTH WORLD SPIRITS AND THE PARENTS OF A NEW-- POSSIBLY BETTER-- HUMANITY.
IS THIS FORGE WHO SPEAKS--
--OR THE ADVERSARY, THROUGH HIM?
DO I BELIEVE WORDS, OR HEART--
--WHEN BOTH HAVE LIED??
AND THE ALTERNATIVE?
WE GO BACK.
ASSUMING WE'RE BRAVE AND INVENTIVE-- AND MAYBE FOOLISH-- ENOUGH.
BUT IF WE DO, ALL BETS ARE OFF. WE BECOME PART OF THAT EARTH'S FATE. IT DIES, WE DIE. NO NEW BEGINNING, NO SECOND CHANCE-- FOR US OR THE WORLD OR HUMANITY. *FINITO*, SWEETHEART.
OF COURSE, WE MIGHT ALWAYS WIN-- BUT I WOULDN'T BET THOSE ODDS.
YOU SPEAK AS THOUGH WE HAVE A WAY HOME.
WHAT D'YOU THINK I'VE BEEN WORKING TOWARDS WHILE YOU'VE BEEN ROAMING THE GLOBE?
I'M THE MAKER, ORORO-- BUT YOU'RE THE *LIFE-FORCE* THAT GIVES ME PURPOSE. THAT ENABLES ME TO BEST USE THE TOOLS I BUILD.
BY OURSELVES, WE'RE CRIPPLED. TOGETHER--
--THE POSSIBILITIES ARE INFINITE.
SMOOTH AND SILVER-TONGUED DEVIL--
--SHOW ME.
ATOP MY NEW AERIE.
UP THERE.

DALLAS
SO THIS IS WHAT MY BOY...
...WAS TRYIN' TO WRITE ABOUT IN HIS LETTERS.
EVEN AT NIGHT, GODFORSAKEN PLACE IS HOT AS A STEAMBATH.
WHAT DID YOU MEAN, NOT AN ACCIDENT?
FORGE LOST HIS HAND AN' LEG IN THE 'NAM.
AN', WAY I HEAR TELL...
...IT'S WHERE HE RENOUNCED HIS MAGIC--!
COMRADES-- BEWARE!
BUDDA BUDDA
SNIPER!
HIT THE DECK!
VIET CONG!
STINKING MASK!
CAN'T SEE. HAVE TO AIM MY LASER SHOT BY THE SOUND OF GUN-FIRE, HOPE FOR THE BEST.
WISH SPIRAL-- ROT HER STINKING SOUL-- WAS THE TARGET!
VORP!
MISSED, LADY!
LUCKY FER YOU...
... I WON'T.
BOOM!
FAIR SHOOTIN'.
DID THE JOB.
DON'T MUCH LIKE "CHARLEY" HERE.
DON'T LIKE YOU MUTIES, EITHER.
HIS EYES--
--HIS SCENT--
--THIS "GOOD OL' BOY" ISN'T WHAT HE SEEMS.
BUT THEN-- 'ROUND THIS MADHOUSE-- WHAT IS?
TROOPER WASN'T ALONE. LOTS MORE CONG-- SCENTS ARE HEAVY, THEY'RE CLOSE BY.
AMERICANS, TOO.
PROBABLY BE A ROYAL FIREFIGHT BEFORE LONG. WOULDN'T DO TO BE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE.
WOLVERINE! I'VE SPOTTED ROMA'S THOUGHT-TRACES!
SHE'S PRESENT IN THIS REALITY-MODE-- AND I BELIEVE I CAN PIN-POINT HER POSITION!

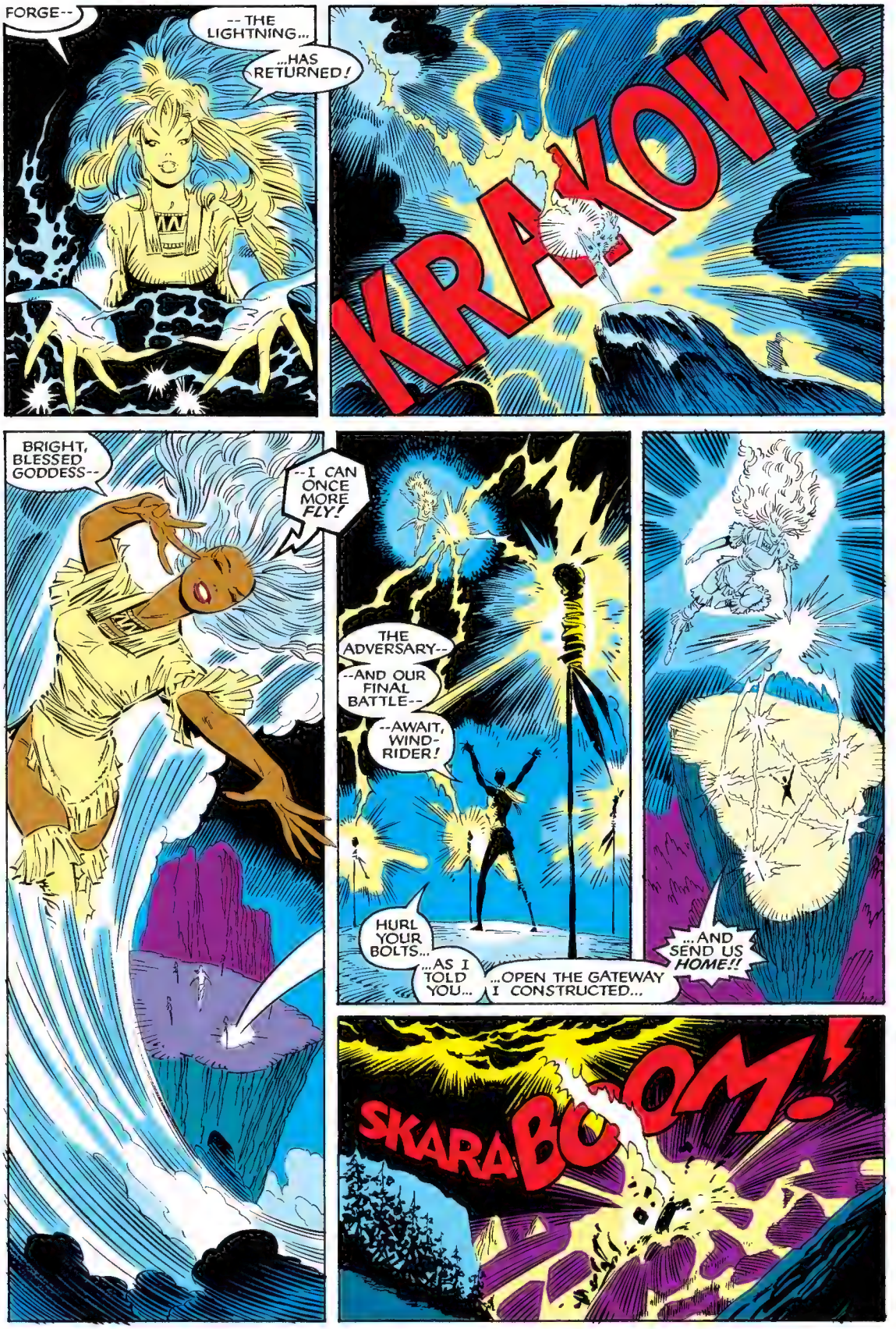

NOW AIN'T THAT CONVENIENT.
AN' ABOUT AS OBVIOUS AN INVITE TO A TRAP AS EVER I'VE HEARD.
YOU CAN'T MEAN TO ACCEPT?!
WE GOT AN OPTION? IF ROMA'S THE KEY, AND SHE'S HERE, WE GOTTA GO.
Y'ALL CLAIM TO BE "HEROES."
DON'T THAT MAKE IT...
...YORE JOB?
YOU DON'T BELONG HERE, HUMAN.
THIS IS MY WORLD, MUTIE! IT'S YOUR KIND WHAT DON'T B' LONG!
MY "KIND"-- MUTANTKIND-- INTENDS TO SAVE THIS WORLD, INCLUDING, REGRETTABLY, THOSE...
...WHO DON'T DESERVE IT!
SOMEONE REMOVE THIS CRETINOUS OAF...
...BEFORE I FORGET WHICH SIDE I'M ON.
YOU HEARD THE LADY, CHUMP.
FREEDOM FORCE WILL ACCOMPANY...
NOPE.
WOLVERINE--!
THINK, WOMAN. IF THIS IS A TRAP, NO SENSE IN ALL OF US BEING CAUGHT.
MOREOVER, SOMEBODY'S GOTTA STAY BEHIND TO PROTECT THE CIVILIANS. YOU'RE FEDS, MYSTIQUE...
...THAT GIVES YOU A CREDIBILITY MY OUTFIT CAN'T MATCH.
THE X-MEN, WE'RE OUTLAWS. EXPENDABLE. NOBODY'LL CARE IF WE TOSS OUR LIVES AWAY.
MORE'N A FEW'LL PROBABLY BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF. AN' SOME'LL CHEER.
WOLVERINE, DESTINY SEES NOTHING BUT DEATH FOR YOU--!
YUP. OURS ALONE...
...OR OURS AN' THE WORLD'S.
IF WE GOTTA GO EITHER WAY...
...MIGHT AS WELL MAKE IT MEAN SOMETHING.
SIR...
...I'D LIKE TO SHAKE YOUR HAND.


ELSEWHERE
...MY NEUTRALIZER DIDN'T SO MUCH REMOVE YOUR POWERS MONTHS AGO...
...AS ERASE THE RNA GENETIC CODES THAT ENABLED YOU TO ACCESS THEM.
YOUR POWERS WERE-- ARE-- STILL YOURS, YOU SIMPLY LACKED THE ABILITY TO CONSCIOUSLY MANIPULATE THEM.
ALTHOUGH, OCCASIONALLY, THERE MIGHT BE REACTIONS TO EXTREMES OF EMOTIONAL, SUB-CONSCIOUS PROMPTING.
YOU MEAN--THERE IS HOPE?!
FOR ME TO ONCE MORE COMMAND THE ELEMENTS--
--oh, FORGE, TO FLY?!!
IF MY RESEARCHES AND CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT.
IF I'VE BUILT RIGHT.
IF YOU WANT IT BADLY ENOUGH.
YOU CANNOT IMAGINE HOW BADLY.
ALL WELL AND GOOD TO THINK OF WHAT YOU HAVE TO GAIN, WIND-RIDER--
--BUT ALSO CONSIDER THE COST.
BECAUSE IT'S SURE TO BE COMMENSURATE.
TELL ME.

DALLAS
SAME DEAL HERE AS WHEN WE CAME TO DALLAS--
--THIS IS A VOLUNTEER CAPER, PURE AN' SIMPLE--
--ANYONE CAN BACK OUT, NO GUILT, NO SHAME.
I SPEAK FOR THE TEAM, BOSS--
--TIME'S WASTING.
I'M OBLIGED, KID.
YOU GOT NO BRAINS, BUT THE HEART OF A GRIZZLY.
BUT YOU, DAZZLER, AN' MS. PRYOR...
YOU JUST TRY AND STOP ME, MISTER, YOU JUST TRY!
I'M AN X-MAN, WOLVERINE! I'M WITH YOU TO THE END!!
AND I'LL BE HER EYES.
YOU TWO ARE CRAZY!
HEY, SUGAR...
...THEY'RE JUST TAKIN' AFTER YOU.
WISH US LUCK, Y'ALL.
LOVE TO DESTINY, MYSTIQUE.
ROGUE!
DAUGHTER!!
BE SEEIN' YOU...
...MOM!
WE MAY BE BACK--
--WE MAY NOT--
--WHICHEVER...
...REMEMBER US!
WE WILL, X-MEN.
ALWAYS.


ELSE-WHERE
THE SOLAR ENERGY POWER SYSTEM WAS EASY.
THIS, THOUGH, REQUIRED MORE THAN HALF THE CIRCUITRY IN MY BIONIC LEG.
IT'S LITERALLY A ONE-SHOT DEAL-- AND IF IT'S A BOTCH, I DOUBT EVEN AN OLD TESTAMENT LIFE-TIME WILL BE ENOUGH FOR ME TO REGENERATE SUFFICIENT TECHNOLOGY FOR ANOTHER TRY.
MOREOVER, A FAILURE COULD KILL. OR WORSE.
ONCE WE START, STORM, THERE'S NO TURNING BACK.
WE "STARTED", I THINK...
...THE MOMENT WE MET.
I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS.
I LOVE YOU, ORORO. I WANT TO CARRY YOU BACK TO THE HOUSE, TAKE YOU TO BED, I WANT US TO HAVE THE HAPPINESS WE'VE BOTH EARNED.
THE FUTURE AND FAMILY WE DESERVE.
NO LESS THAN I, MY BRAVE.
BUT THEN, YOU WOULD NOT BE WORTHY OF THE ADVERSARY'S RESPECT...
...NOR I OF YOUR HEART.
WE ARE BOUND, FORGE, BY WHAT WE ARE.
DOESN'T MEAN A BODY CAN'T HOPE AND DREAM--
--AND RAGE AT THE UNFAIR, UNCARING FATES.
WHAT MUST I DO?
JUST-- HOLD THAT POSE!
SKSZAPT!
THEY'RE YOUR POWERS, STORM--
--CALL 'EM HOME!

NOTHING.
WE HAVE FAILED.
THE GENETIC CODES HAVE BEEN REESTABLISHED--
--THE POTENTIAL RESTORED--
--BUT YOU STILL HAVE TO ACTUALIZE IT.
IF YOU WANT YOUR POWERS BADLY ENOUGH-- MORE THAN YOUR LIFE-- THEY'LL COME.
BUT IF I BECOME AS I WAS BEFORE--
-- THE UNREACHABLE, UNTOUCHABLE "GODDESS"...
...THEN YOU'LL HAVE LEARNED *NOTHING* FROM THESE PAST MONTHS...
... AND THAT WOULD TRULY BE A TRAGEDY.
EVERYTHING HAS ITS PRICE, ORORO.
IT IS *TOO HIGH!*
rumble rumble
BRAOUMM!


FORGE--
--THE LIGHTNING...
...HAS RETURNED!
KRA-KOW!
BRIGHT, BLESSED GODDESS--
--I CAN ONCE MORE FLY!
THE ADVERSARY--
--AND OUR FINAL BATTLE--
--AWAIT, WIND-RIDER!
HURL YOUR BOLTS...
...AS I TOLD YOU...
...OPEN THE GATEWAY I CONSTRUCTED...
...AND SEND US HOME!!
SKARA-BOOM!

DALLAS
WHERE'D THIS WIND COME FROM?!
WHO CARES, PYRO? IT'S PICKING UP STRENGTH EVERY SECOND.
WE HAVE TO EVACUATE THE AREA...
"...BEFORE IT TEARS FORGE'S SKYSCRAPER APART!"
WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
WELL WELL WELL...
...WILL WONDERS NEVER CEASE?
I ALWAYS SUSPECTED FORGE AND STORM WERE THE WORTHIEST OF FOES.
HOW SPLENDID OF THEM TO PROVE IT.
I ACCEPT YOUR CHALLENGE, WARRIORS!
WITH OPEN ARMS, I WELCOME YOU BACK FROM EXILE!
SUCH A PITY, YOU ARE AS DOOMED TO DEFEAT...
...AS THIS BUILDING--YOUR WORLD, YOUR RACE-- ARE TO ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION!
TIME TO GO.
BUT IF I DO...
PLACE IS CRAZY!
I HATE CRAZY!
...I'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT HAPPENED!
BLOB--NO--LET ME GO!
NOT A CHANCE!
YOU THE BOSS, MYSTY! AIN'T NO WAY I'M LEAVIN' YOU BEHIND.
'SPECIALLY WITH THAT COMMANDO CREEP HOT TO TAKE YOUR PLACE!
NEAL--THAT REPORTER--AND THE X-MEN--THEY'RE STILL INSIDE!!
TOUGH! THEY KNEW THE RISKS.
'SIDES, AIN'T NO TIME TO GO BACK.
*BOOM!
WHOLE BLAME BUILDIN'S COMIN' DOWN!
NEXT: THE BELLY OF THE BEAST!

MARVEL
THE FALL OF THE MUTANTS
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
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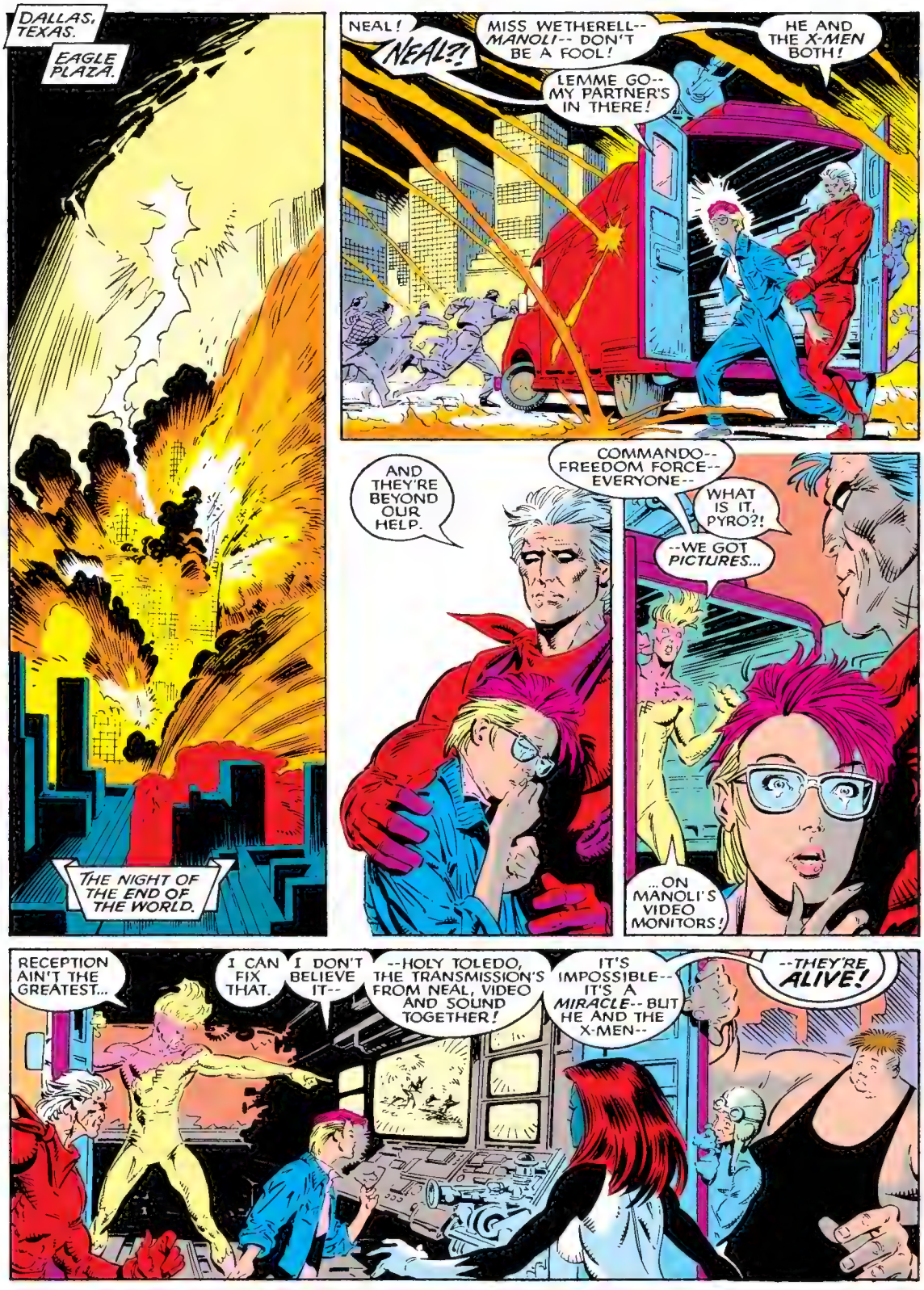

DALLAS, TEXAS.
EAGLE PLAZA.
THE NIGHT OF THE END OF THE WORLD.
NEAL!
NEAL?!
MISS WETHERELL-- MANOLI-- DON'T BE A FOOL!
LEMME GO-- MY PARTNER'S IN THERE!
HE AND THE X-MEN BOTH!
AND THEY'RE BEYOND OUR HELP.
COMMANDO-- FREEDOM FORCE-- EVERYONE--
WHAT IS IT, PYRO?!
--WE GOT PICTURES...
...ON MANOLI'S VIDEO MONITORS!
RECEPTION AIN'T THE GREATEST...
I CAN FIX THAT.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT--
--HOLY TOLEDO, THE TRANSMISSION'S FROM NEAL, VIDEO AND SOUND TOGETHER!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE-- IT'S A MIRACLE-- BUT HE AND THE X-MEN--
--THEY'RE ALIVE!

The belly of the BEAST!

A *STAN LEE* PRESENTATION, STARRING THE UNCANNY *X-MEN*

WRITER: CHRIS CLAREMONT
PENCILER: MARC SILVESTRI
INKER: DAN GREEN
LETTERER: TOM ORZECHOWSKI
COLORIST: BILL WRAY
EDITOR: ANN NOCENTI
EDITOR IN CHIEF: TOM DeFALCO

"FOR THE RECORD, MY NAME'S *NEAL CONAN*. I'M A REPORTER FOR *NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO*.

"A MOMENT AGO, I RAN ACROSS THE LOBBY OF A MODERN SKYSCRAPER...

"...SMACK INTO THE VIETNAMESE JUNGLE...

"... AND A PITCHED BATTLE BETWEEN A FORCE OF NVA REGULARS AND WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED...

"... AS *DEMONS*.

"THIS IS *CRAZY*-- BUT THEN, THE SAME CAN BE SAID FOR EVERYTHING ELSE THAT'S HAPPENED TONIGHT.

"I'M NOT ALONE. I CAME FOLLOWING THE *X-MEN*-- THEY'RE MUTANTS, WHICH TO MOST PEOPLE MAKES THEM OUTCASTS.

"OBJECTS OF FEAR, OR OUTRIGHT HATRED.

"FORTUNATELY, THEY DON'T FEEL THE SAME ABOUT US.

SNIKT!

"BIG, SHINY FELLA'S *COLOSSUS*. ARMORED BODY, WITH STRENGTH TO MATCH.

"*WOLVERINE'S* THEIR BOSS.

"YOU DON'T WANT TO MESS WITH HIM, EVER. ESPECIALLY SINCE THOSE RETRACTABLE CLAWS OF HIS CAN CUT THROUGH ANYTHING.

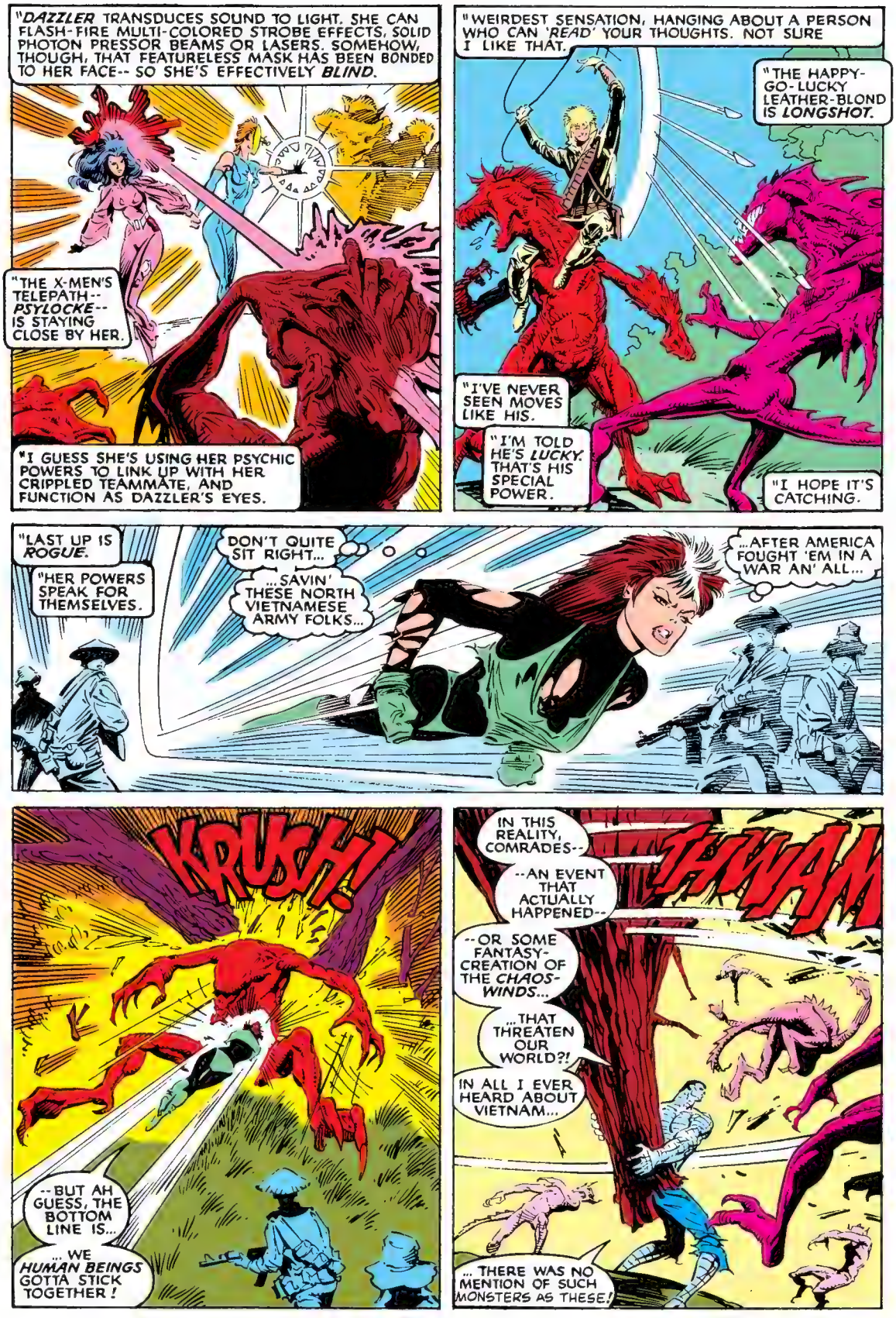
"TALL MAN, ALL IN BLACK, HE'S *HAVOK*.

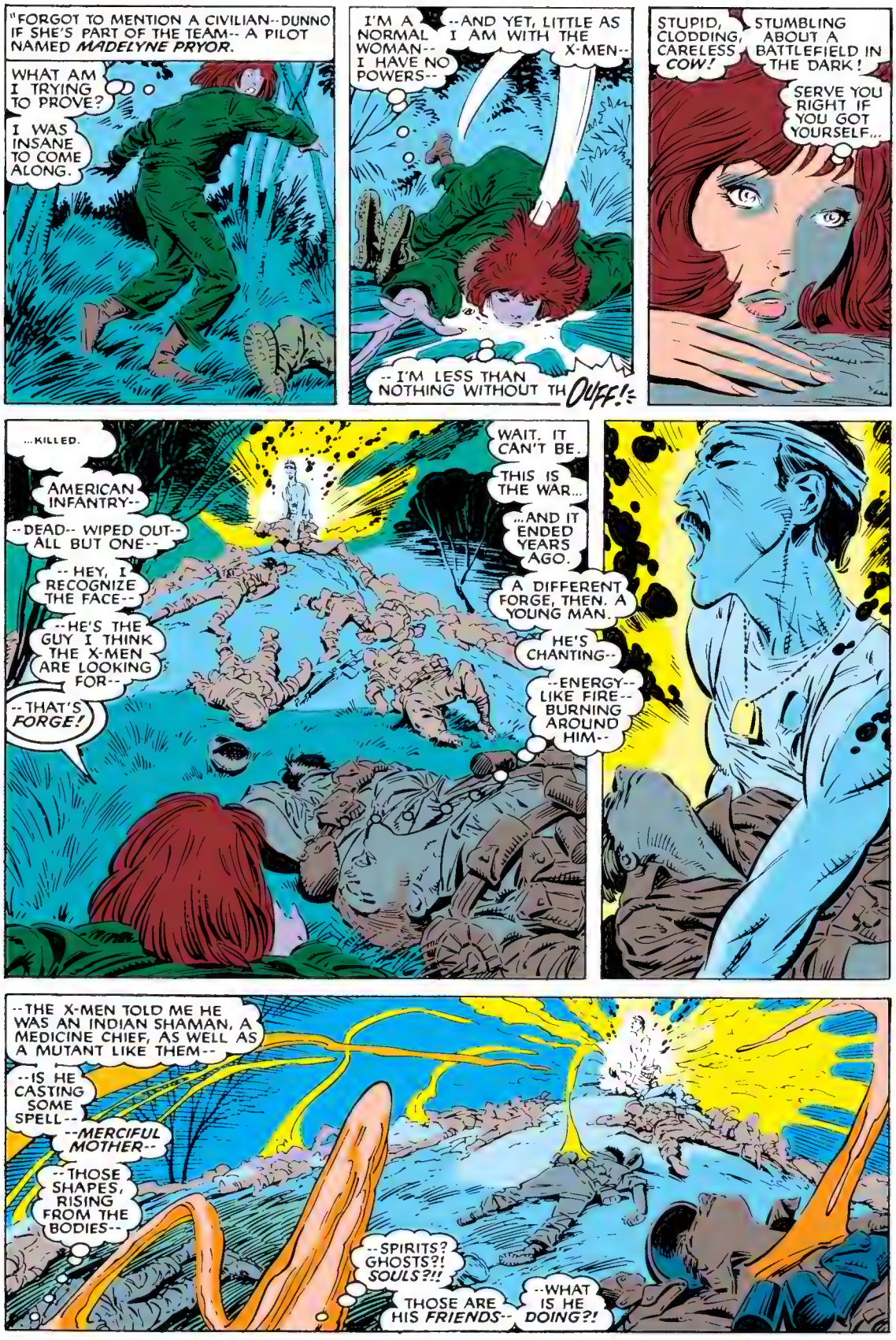
"APTLY NAMED, SINCE HE FIRES BEAMS OF FOCUSED, COHERENT ENERGY PLASMA.

"I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT WATCHING HIM IN ACTION, I SUDDENLY REALIZE WHY SOME FOLKS ARE SO SPOOKED. HE'S A MAN WIELDING THE RAW POWER OF THE SUN.

"WHAT ARE WE, COMPARED TO THAT?

ZFWAM!

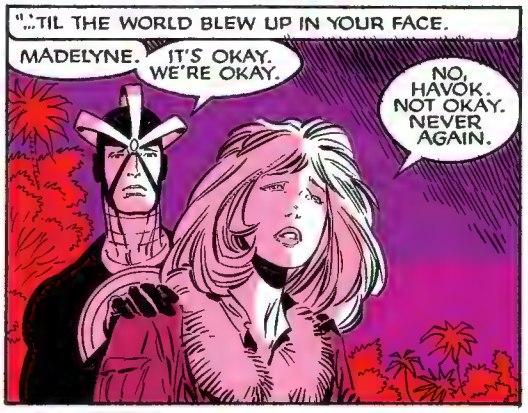

"DAZZLER TRANSDUCES SOUND TO LIGHT. SHE CAN FLASH-FIRE MULTI-COLORED STROBE EFFECTS, SOLID PHOTON PRESSOR BEAMS OR LASERS. SOMEHOW, THOUGH, THAT FEATURELESS MASK HAS BEEN BONDED TO HER FACE-- SO SHE'S EFFECTIVELY BLIND.
"THE X-MEN'S TELEPATH-- PSYLOCKE-- IS STAYING CLOSE BY HER.
"I GUESS SHE'S USING HER PSYCHIC POWERS TO LINK UP WITH HER CRIPPLED TEAMMATE, AND FUNCTION AS DAZZLER'S EYES.
"WEIRDEST SENSATION, HANGING ABOUT A PERSON WHO CAN 'READ' YOUR THOUGHTS. NOT SURE I LIKE THAT.
"THE HAPPY-GO-LUCKY LEATHER-BLOND IS LONGSHOT.
"I'VE NEVER SEEN MOVES LIKE HIS.
"I'M TOLD HE'S LUCKY. THAT'S HIS SPECIAL POWER.
"I HOPE IT'S CATCHING.
"LAST UP IS ROGUE.
"HER POWERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.
DON'T QUITE SIT RIGHT...
...SAVIN' THESE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY FOLKS...
...AFTER AMERICA FOUGHT 'EM IN A WAR AN' ALL...
KRUSH!
--BUT AH GUESS, THE BOTTOM LINE IS...
... WE HUMAN BEINGS GOTTA STICK TOGETHER!
IN THIS REALITY, COMRADES--
--AN EVENT THAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED--
--OR SOME FANTASY-CREATION OF THE CHAOS-WINDS...
...THAT THREATEN OUR WORLD?!
IN ALL I EVER HEARD ABOUT VIETNAM...
THWAM
... THERE WAS NO MENTION OF SUCH MONSTERS AS THESE!

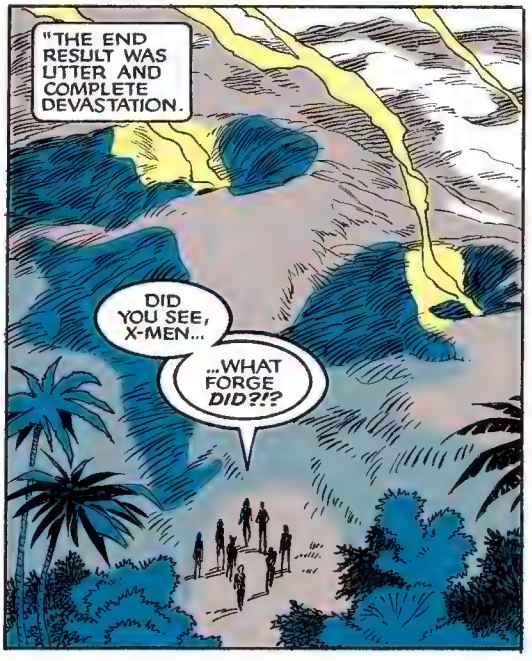

"FORGOT TO MENTION A CIVILIAN--DUNNO IF SHE'S PART OF THE TEAM-- A PILOT NAMED MADELYNE PRYOR.
WHAT AM I TRYING TO PROVE?
I WAS INSANE TO COME ALONG.
I'M A NORMAL WOMAN-- I HAVE NO POWERS--
--AND YET, LITTLE AS I AM WITH THE X-MEN--
--I'M LESS THAN NOTHING WITHOUT TH
OUFF!
STUPID, CLODDING, CARELESS COW!
STUMBLING ABOUT A BATTLEFIELD IN THE DARK!
SERVE YOU RIGHT IF YOU GOT YOURSELF...
...KILLED.
AMERICAN INFANTRY--
--DEAD-- WIPED OUT-- ALL BUT ONE--
-- HEY, I RECOGNIZE THE FACE--
--HE'S THE GUY I THINK THE X-MEN ARE LOOKING FOR--
--THAT'S FORGE!
WAIT. IT CAN'T BE.
THIS IS THE WAR...
...AND IT ENDED YEARS AGO.
A DIFFERENT FORGE, THEN. A YOUNG MAN.
HE'S CHANTING--
--ENERGY-- LIKE FIRE-- BURNING AROUND HIM--
--THE X-MEN TOLD ME HE WAS AN INDIAN SHAMAN, A MEDICINE CHIEF, AS WELL AS A MUTANT LIKE THEM--
--IS HE CASTING SOME SPELL--
--MERCIFUL MOTHER--
--THOSE SHAPES, RISING FROM THE BODIES--
--SPIRITS? GHOSTS?! SOULS?!!
THOSE ARE HIS FRIENDS--
--WHAT IS HE DOING?!

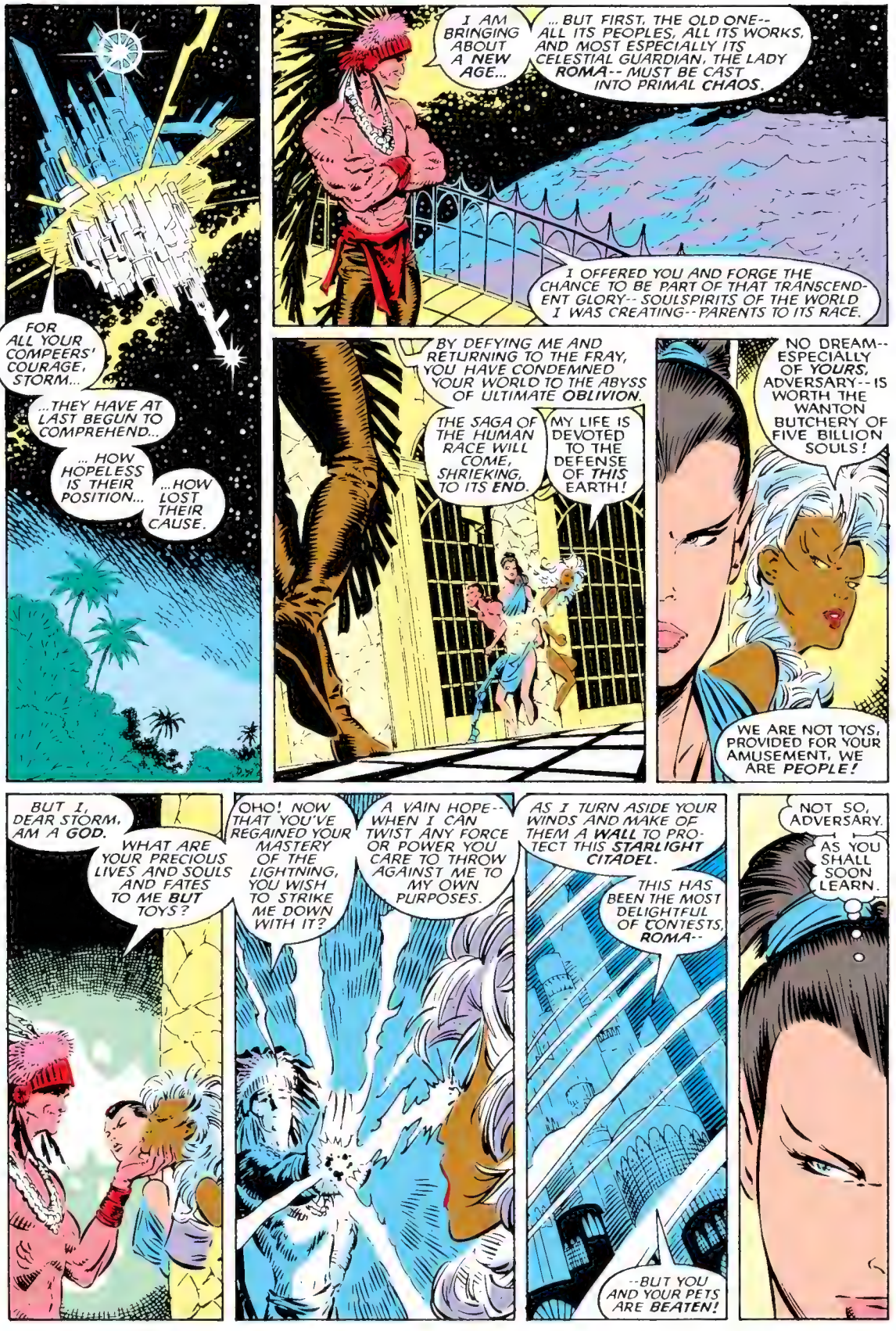
SPIRITS HAVE I SUMMONED--
--IN THE ANCIENT TONGUE AND BY THE SACRED WAYS--
--THEIR LIFE-FORCE HAVE I CLAIMED!
NOW, LET THE STRENGTH OF THEIR WARRIOR-SOULS...
... OPEN WIDE THIS LAST AND GREATEST GATE--
-- THAT THEIR DEATH MAY BE AVENGED!
NO!

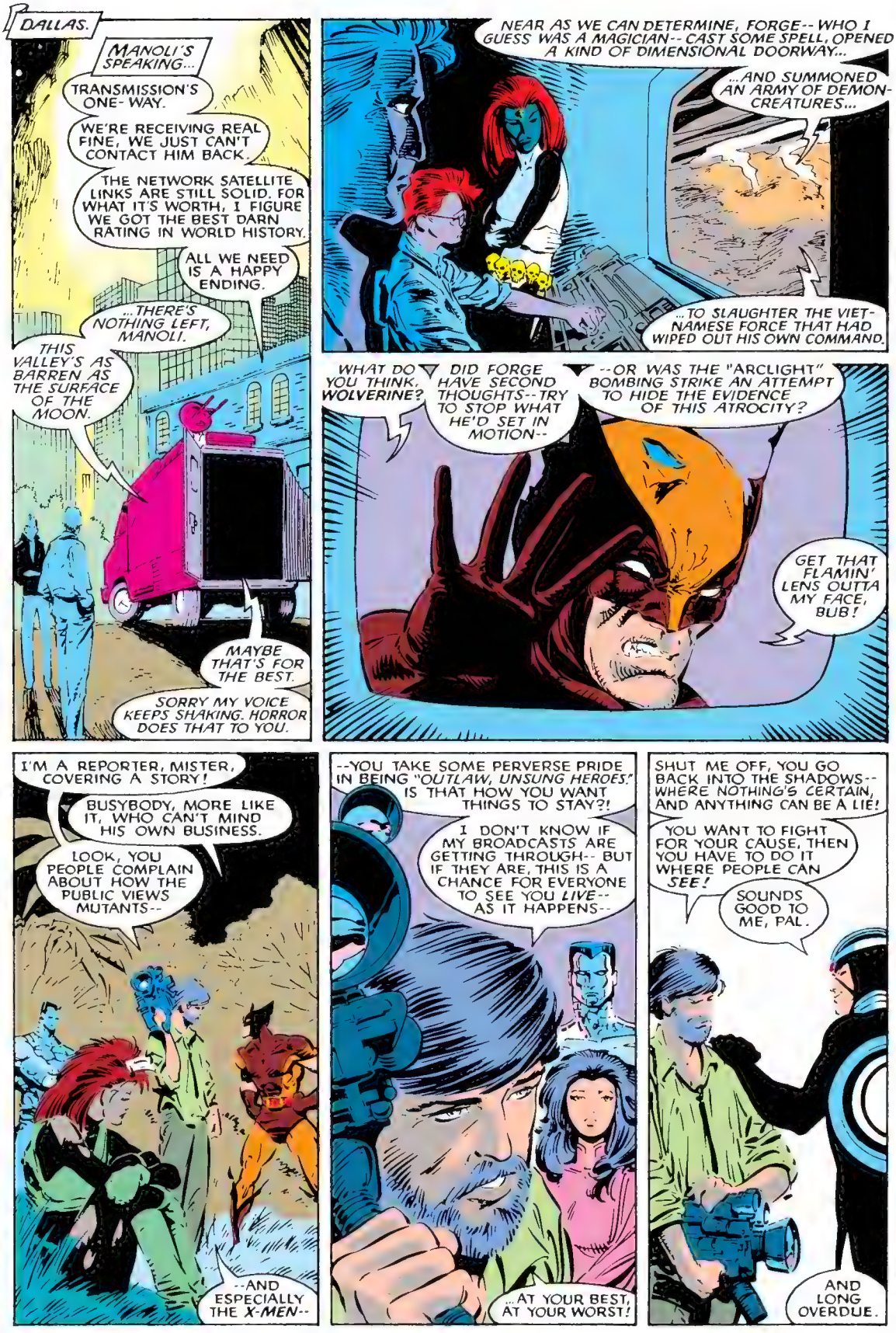
Whua--?!
WHOZZAT?!?
SCREAM!
SO MANY SCREAMS--
--AIR FULL OF THEM--
-- I SHOULD BE HAPPY--
-- KILLING GROUND--
--CHARNAL PIT--
--THIS VALLEY--
--OBSCENITY--
--MY SOUL--
-- I DIDN'T KNOW--
--DIDN'T WANT TO DIE--
--WANTED THEM TO PAY--
--I WAS ANGRY--
--BUT NOT...
--I WAS SCARED--
...LIKE THIS!
OVERLORD--
--THIS IS FORGE. SITUATION DESPERATE. REQUIRE IMMEDIATE "ARCLIGHT," MY POSITION--OVER AND OUT!

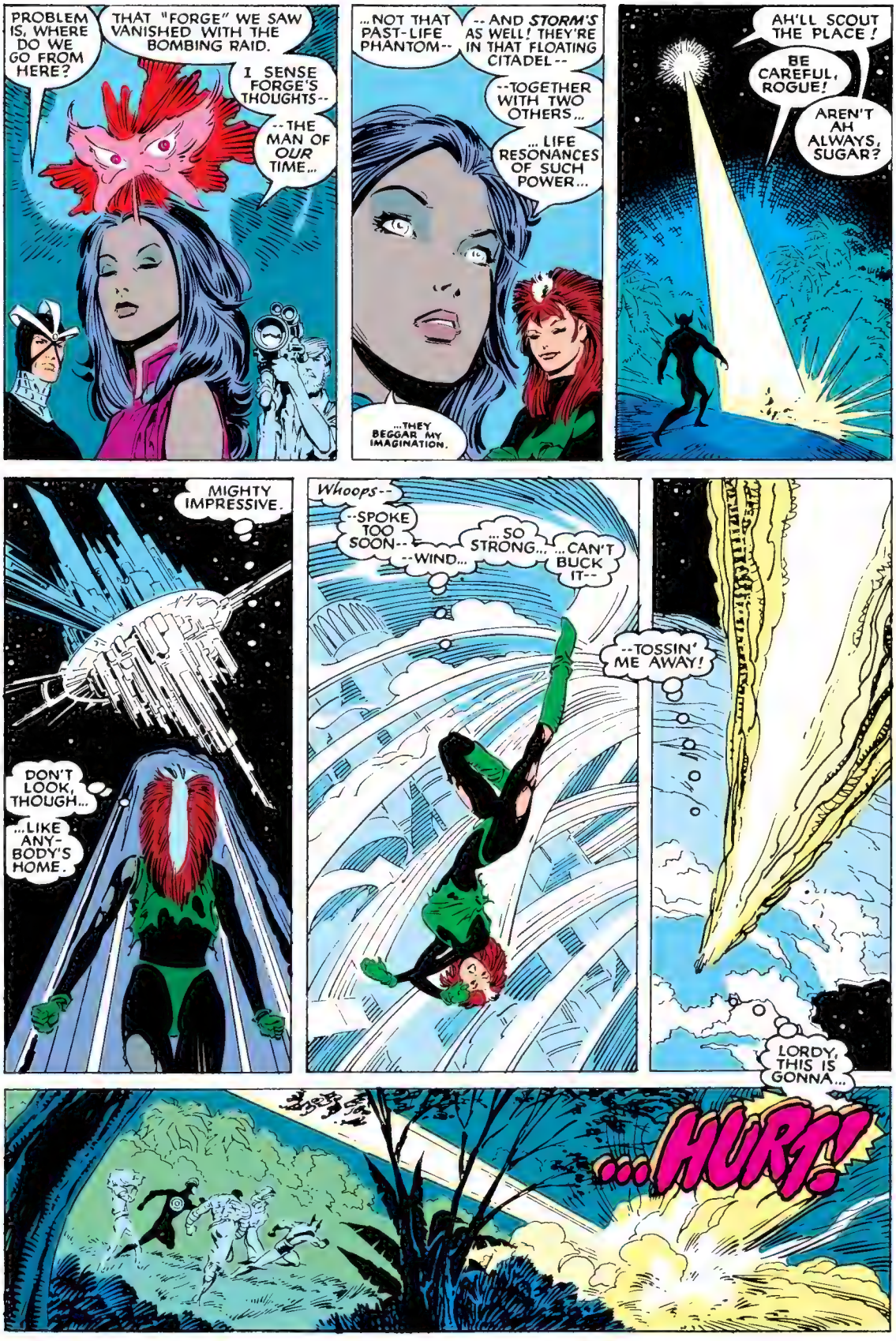
"I KNOW THE TERM. HE'S JUST CALLED IN AN AIR STRIKE.
"OVERHEAD, 'BUFF'S' UNLOAD. 'BIG-UGLY-FAT-FELLAS.' B-52's.
"DESIGNED TO DROP HYDROGEN BOMBS, IN VIETNAM THEY CARRIED CONVENTIONAL ORDNANCE. SIXTY THOUSAND POUNDS WORTH. FROM SO HIGH AN ALTITUDE THAT YOU NEVER KNEW YOU WERE A TARGET...


"...'TIL THE WORLD BLEW UP IN YOUR FACE.
MADELYNE.
IT'S OKAY. WE'RE OKAY.
NO, HAVOK. NOT OKAY. NEVER AGAIN.


"THE END RESULT WAS UTTER AND COMPLETE DEVASTATION.
DID YOU SEE, X-MEN...
...WHAT FORGE DID?!?


FOR ALL YOUR COMPEERS' COURAGE, STORM...
...THEY HAVE AT LAST BEGUN TO COMPREHEND...
... HOW HOPELESS IS THEIR POSITION...
...HOW LOST THEIR CAUSE.
I AM BRINGING ABOUT A NEW AGE...
... BUT FIRST, THE OLD ONE-- ALL ITS PEOPLES, ALL ITS WORKS, AND MOST ESPECIALLY ITS CELESTIAL GUARDIAN, THE LADY ROMA-- MUST BE CAST INTO PRIMAL CHAOS.
I OFFERED YOU AND FORGE THE CHANCE TO BE PART OF THAT TRANSCENDENT GLORY-- SOULSPIRITS OF THE WORLD I WAS CREATING-- PARENTS TO ITS RACE.
BY DEFYING ME AND RETURNING TO THE FRAY, YOU HAVE CONDEMNED YOUR WORLD TO THE ABYSS OF ULTIMATE OBLIVION.
THE SAGA OF THE HUMAN RACE WILL COME, SHRIEKING, TO ITS END.
MY LIFE IS DEVOTED TO THE DEFENSE OF THIS EARTH!
NO DREAM-- ESPECIALLY OF YOURS, ADVERSARY-- IS WORTH THE WANTON BUTCHERY OF FIVE BILLION SOULS!
WE ARE NOT TOYS, PROVIDED FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT, WE ARE PEOPLE!
BUT I, DEAR STORM, AM A GOD.
WHAT ARE YOUR PRECIOUS LIVES AND SOULS AND FATES TO ME BUT TOYS?
OHO! NOW THAT YOU'VE REGAINED YOUR MASTERY OF THE LIGHTNING, YOU WISH TO STRIKE ME DOWN WITH IT?
A VAIN HOPE-- WHEN I CAN TWIST ANY FORCE OR POWER YOU CARE TO THROW AGAINST ME TO MY OWN PURPOSES.
AS I TURN ASIDE YOUR WINDS AND MAKE OF THEM A WALL TO PROTECT THIS STARLIGHT CITADEL.
THIS HAS BEEN THE MOST DELIGHTFUL OF CONTESTS, ROMA--
--BUT YOU AND YOUR PETS ARE BEATEN!
NOT SO, ADVERSARY.
AS YOU SHALL SOON LEARN.

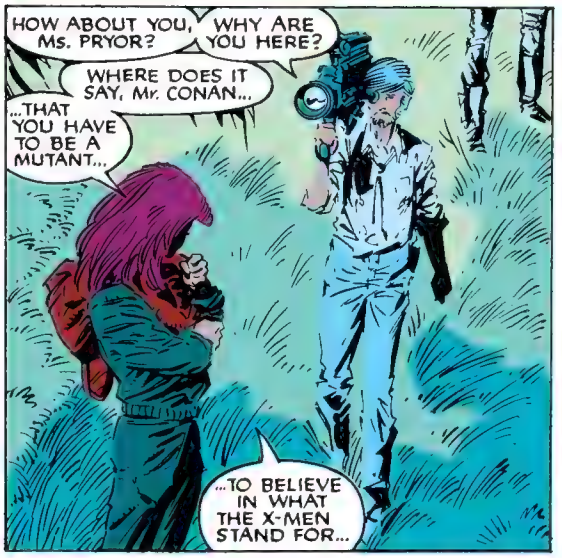

DALLAS.
MANOLI'S SPEAKING...
TRANSMISSION'S ONE-WAY.
WE'RE RECEIVING REAL FINE, WE JUST CAN'T CONTACT HIM BACK.
THE NETWORK SATELLITE LINKS ARE STILL SOLID. FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, I FIGURE WE GOT THE BEST DARN RATING IN WORLD HISTORY.
ALL WE NEED IS A HAPPY ENDING.
...THERE'S NOTHING LEFT, MANOLI.
THIS VALLEY'S AS BARREN AS THE SURFACE OF THE MOON.
MAYBE THAT'S FOR THE BEST.
SORRY MY VOICE KEEPS SHAKING. HORROR DOES THAT TO YOU.
NEAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, FORGE-- WHO I GUESS WAS A MAGICIAN-- CAST SOME SPELL, OPENED A KIND OF DIMENSIONAL DOORWAY...
...AND SUMMONED AN ARMY OF DEMON-CREATURES...
...TO SLAUGHTER THE VIET-NAMESE FORCE THAT HAD WIPED OUT HIS OWN COMMAND.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, WOLVERINE?
DID FORGE HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS--TRY TO STOP WHAT HE'D SET IN MOTION--
--OR WAS THE "ARCLIGHT" BOMBING STRIKE AN ATTEMPT TO HIDE THE EVIDENCE OF THIS ATROCITY?
GET THAT FLAMIN' LENS OUTTA MY FACE, BUB!
I'M A REPORTER, MISTER, COVERING A STORY!
BUSYBODY, MORE LIKE IT, WHO CAN'T MIND HIS OWN BUSINESS.
LOOK, YOU PEOPLE COMPLAIN ABOUT HOW THE PUBLIC VIEWS MUTANTS--
--AND ESPECIALLY THE X-MEN--
--YOU TAKE SOME PERVERSE PRIDE IN BEING "OUTLAW, UNSUNG HEROES." IS THAT HOW YOU WANT THINGS TO STAY?!
I DON'T KNOW IF MY BROADCASTS ARE GETTING THROUGH-- BUT IF THEY ARE, THIS IS A CHANCE FOR EVERYONE TO SEE YOU LIVE-- AS IT HAPPENS--
...AT YOUR BEST, AT YOUR WORST!
SHUT ME OFF, YOU GO BACK INTO THE SHADOWS-- WHERE NOTHING'S CERTAIN, AND ANYTHING CAN BE A LIE!
YOU WANT TO FIGHT FOR YOUR CAUSE, THEN YOU HAVE TO DO IT WHERE PEOPLE CAN SEE!
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME, PAL.
AND LONG OVERDUE.


PROBLEM IS, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
THAT "FORGE" WE SAW VANISHED WITH THE BOMBING RAID.
I SENSE FORGE'S THOUGHTS--
--THE MAN OF OUR TIME...
...NOT THAT PAST-LIFE PHANTOM--
-- AND STORM'S AS WELL! THEY'RE IN THAT FLOATING CITADEL--
--TOGETHER WITH TWO OTHERS...
... LIFE RESONANCES OF SUCH POWER...
...THEY BEGGAR MY IMAGINATION.
AH'LL SCOUT THE PLACE!
BE CAREFUL, ROGUE!
AREN'T AH ALWAYS, SUGAR?
MIGHTY IMPRESSIVE.
DON'T LOOK, THOUGH...
...LIKE ANY-BODY'S HOME.
Whoops--
--SPOKE TOO SOON--
--WIND...
... SO STRONG...
...CAN'T BUCK IT--
--TOSSIN' ME AWAY!
LORDY, THIS IS GONNA...
...HURT!

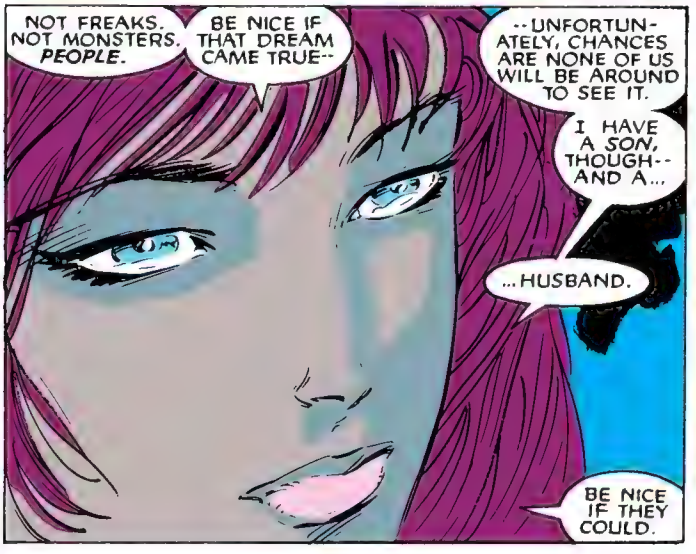
"METEORS HAVE HIT WITH LESS FORCE, YET-- MIRACULOUSLY-- ROGUE'S STILL ALIVE.
HEY, Mr. CONAN-- JUST 'CAUSE AH'M CUTE DON'T MEAN AH AIN'T TOUGH.
YOU WATCH YOURSELF, MADELYNE. MY COSTUME S MORE RAGS THAN NOT.
ANYONE TOUCHES THEIR BARE SKIN TO MINE...
...AH'LL ABSORB THEIR PSYCHE AN' POWERS.
WOULDN'T WANT TO ACCIDENTLY DO THE BAD GUY'S WORK FOR HIM.
SO MUCH FOR THE DIRECT APPROACH.
APPEARS WE'RE NO MATCH FOR THIS ADVERSARY AS INDIVIDUALS...
... WHICH MEANS OUR ONLY SHOT-- SLIM AS IT MAY BE-- IS TO CONFRONT HIM AS A TEAM.
GREAT IDEA, FELLA--
--ONLY THE CREEP'S UP IN THAT FLOATING CASTLE...
... PROTECTED BY A STINKING HURRICANE!
SO TELL US, WOLVERINE--
--HOW THE HECK ARE WE SUPPOSED TO "CONFRONT" HIM...
...WHEN WE CAN'T EVEN REACH HIM!
COULDN'T LONGSHOT PULL US?
I MEAN, HIS BONES ARE HOLLOW-- IF THAT WIND IS STRONG ENOUGH, HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO SOAR ON IT...
... LIKE THE SAIL OF A KITE, HAULING US ALONG BEHIND AS ITS STRING.
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, HIS INCREDIBLE LUCK MIGHT WELL BRING US ALL SAFELY THROUGH THE MAELSTROM.
DAZZLER, YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!
THAT'S THE CRAZIEST NOTION I'VE EVER HEARD!!
YUP. THE ULTIMATE LONGSHOT, MADELYNE--
--AN' WHO BETTER TO PLAY IT.
IF HE'S WILLING TO TRY...
... I'M WILLING-- BLIND AS I AM--
--TO PUT MY LIFE IN HIS HANDS.
WELL, KID?
WHEN DO WE START?

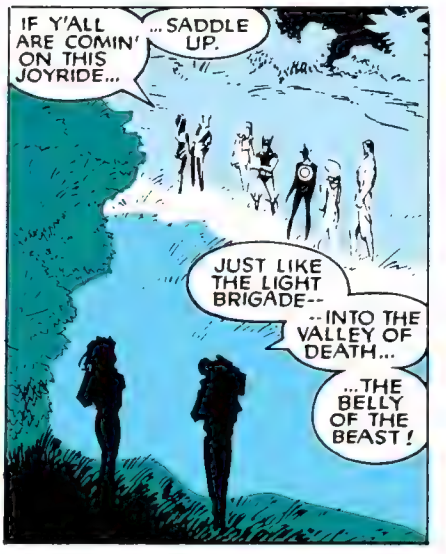
IT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU, LONGSHOT...
...PUTTING YOUR LIFE ON THE LINE...
...AGAINST IMPOSSIBLE ODDS?
YOU'RE HERE WITH US, NEAL...
...DOES IT BOTHER YOU?
SCARES ME SILLY.
BUT I'M A PROFESSIONAL.

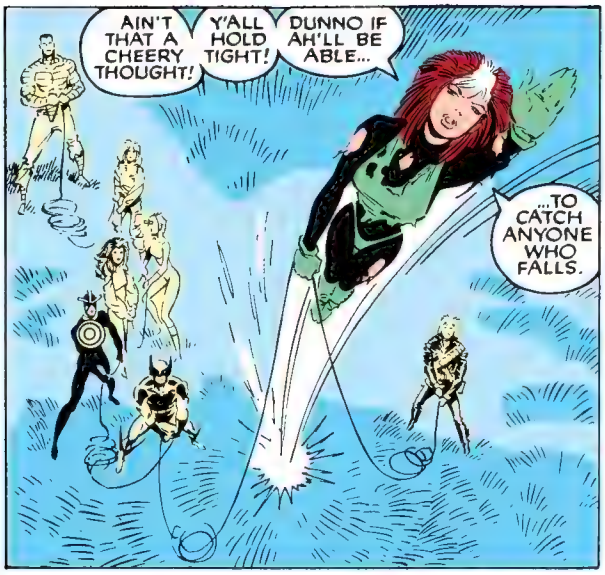
THIS IS MY JOB.
MY FRIENDS ARE IN THE HANDS OF A VILLAIN.
I HAVE TO DO WHAT-EVER I CAN TO FREE THEM.
YOU MAKE IT SOUND SO SIMPLE AND STRAIGHT-FORWARD.
ISN'T IT?


HOW ABOUT YOU, Ms. PRYOR?
WHY ARE YOU HERE?
WHERE DOES IT SAY, Mr. CONAN...
...THAT YOU HAVE TO BE A MUTANT...
...TO BELIEVE IN WHAT THE X-MEN STAND FOR...

...AND BE WILLING TO FIGHT FOR IT BY THEIR SIDES?
WHAT BELIEFS?
TO ECHO *MARTIN LUTHER KING*...
...A WORLD WHERE PEOPLE ARE JUDGED BY THE CONTENT OF THEIR CHARACTER, NOT BY RACE OR COLOR OR POWERS.
WE'RE *ALL* HUMAN BEINGS. WHY CAN'T WE ALL BE TREATED LIKE IT?


NOT FREAKS. NOT MONSTERS. *PEOPLE*.
BE NICE IF THAT DREAM CAME TRUE--
--UNFORTUN-ATELY, CHANCES ARE NONE OF US WILL BE AROUND TO SEE IT.
I HAVE A *SON*, THOUGH-- AND A...
...HUSBAND.
BE NICE IF THEY COULD.


IF Y'ALL ARE COMIN' ON THIS JOYRIDE...
...SADDLE UP.
JUST LIKE THE LIGHT BRIGADE--
--INTO THE VALLEY OF DEATH...
...THE BELLY OF THE BEAST!


AIN'T THAT A CHEERY THOUGHT!
Y'ALL HOLD TIGHT!
DUNNO IF AH'LL BE ABLE...
...TO CATCH ANYONE WHO FALLS.

I AM SO GLAD...
... I CAN'T SEE...
...WHAT'S HAPPENING.

THERE'S THE MAELSTROM!
EVERY-THING RIDES ON THIS!
BE LUCKY, LONGSHOT!
YIPPEE YAHOO!
TAME THAT BIG WIND, PARDNER--
-- LIKE A RODEO WRANGLER WOULD A BUCKING BRONCO!

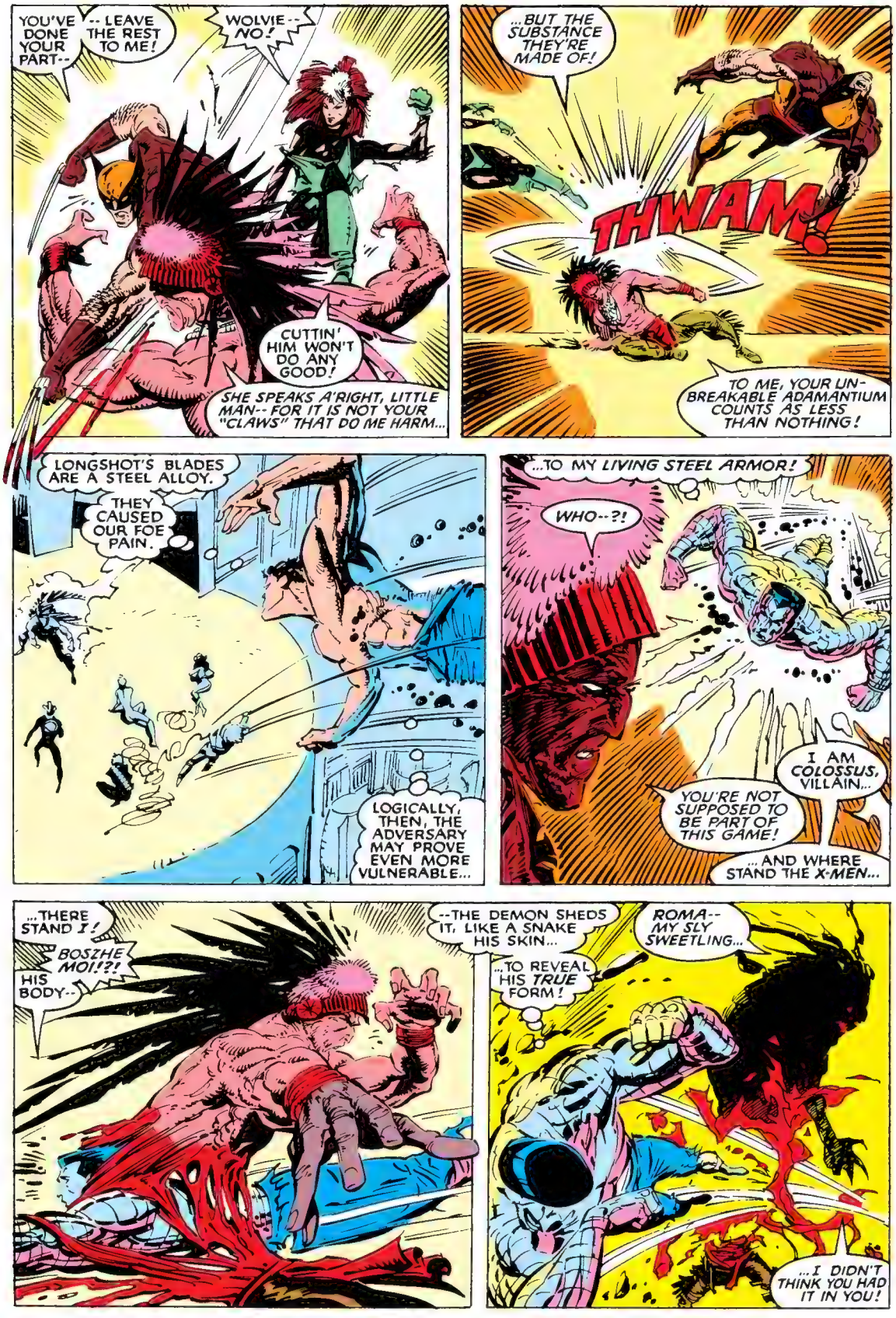
THIS IS CRAZY.
I'M DOOMED.
WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE.
WANT TO CUT LOOSE...
...RUN AWAY HOME...
...TO LEANNE AND THE KIDS...
UP TO ME, AT LAST.
MY ARMORED FORM...
... ANCHORS MY COMRADES TO THE GROUND.

TO RELEASE THIS LINE...
...WILL DEPRIVE THEM OF MY STRENGTH.

THEREFORE...
... I MUST...
...TRANSFORM--
-- DESPITE THE PAIN--

--TO FLESH AND BLOOD!
WHAT THE HECK.
WHAT A WAY TO GO!
WHAT A GANG TO GO WITH!

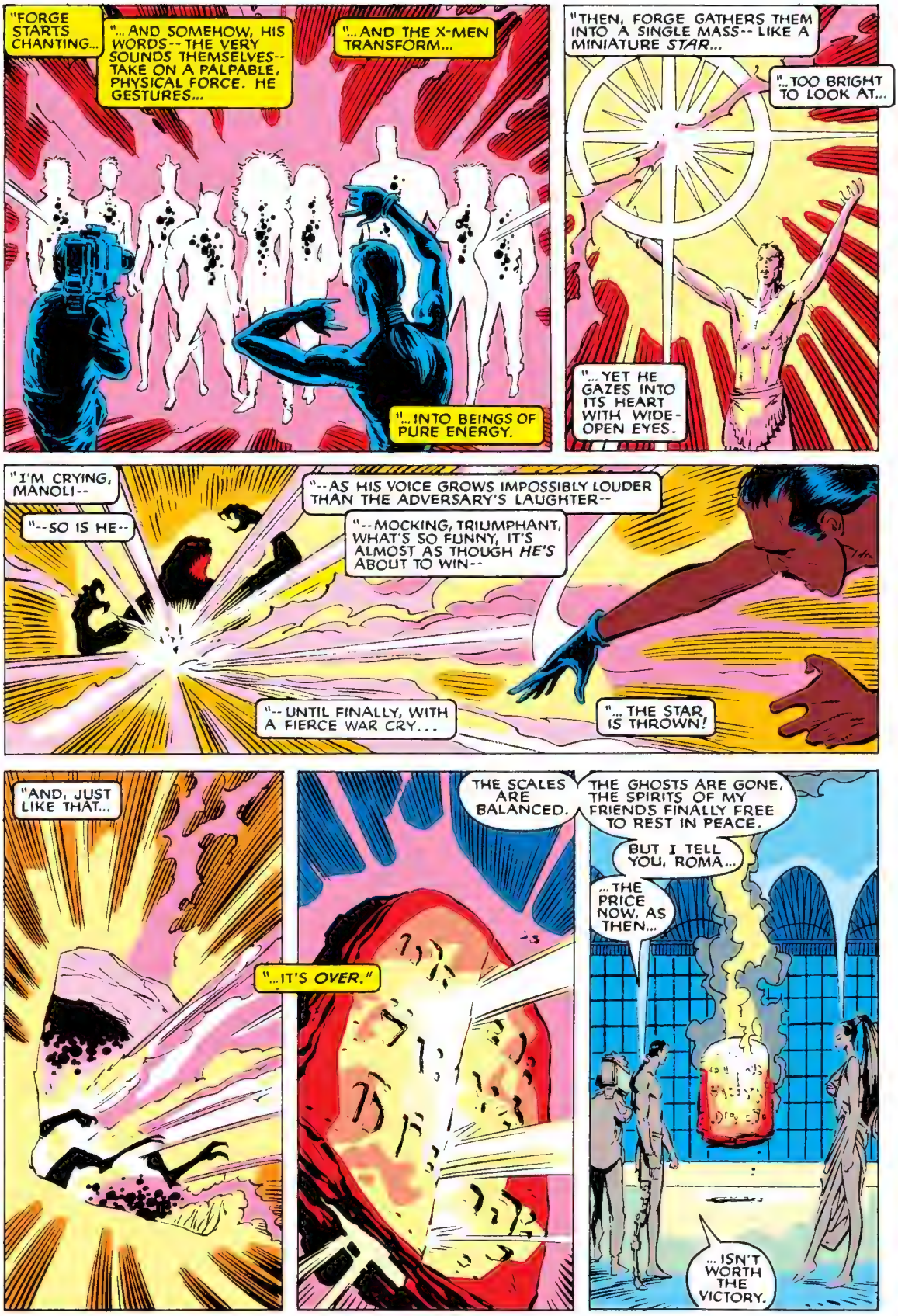
WE'RE THROUGH!
WE MADE IT!
THREE PEOPLE HELD PRISONER AGAINST THAT PILLAR--
--THE ONE WHO ISN'T, WHO'S STANDING FREE--
--MUST BE THE BAD GUY!
I KNEW YOU'D TRY AGAIN TO REACH THE CITADEL...
...BUT TO ACTUALLY SUCCEED-- MAGNIFICENT!
WHAT--?!
THESE BLADES--
--THEIR SUBSTANCE CONTAINS...
...COLD IRON!
ROGUE, I HURT HIM!
LUCKY BOY.
NOW IT'S MY TURN!
HATE THIS--
--THOUGHTS, MEM'RIES DREAMS, REALITIES, ANOTHER PERSON'S PSYCHE FILLIN' MINE...
...WHILE HIS POWERS FLOOD MY BODY.
COOT'S SUPER-CHARGED.
NORMALLY, MY TOUCH KAYO'S 'EM RIGHT OFF.
BUT HE'S STILL AWAKE. STILL FIGHTIN'!
DON'T MIND THE BLOOD.
MORE YOU TOUCH ME, SUCKER...
...THE MORE AH TAKE FROM YOU...
...THE STRONGER AH GET!
PULL AWAY, ROGUE!

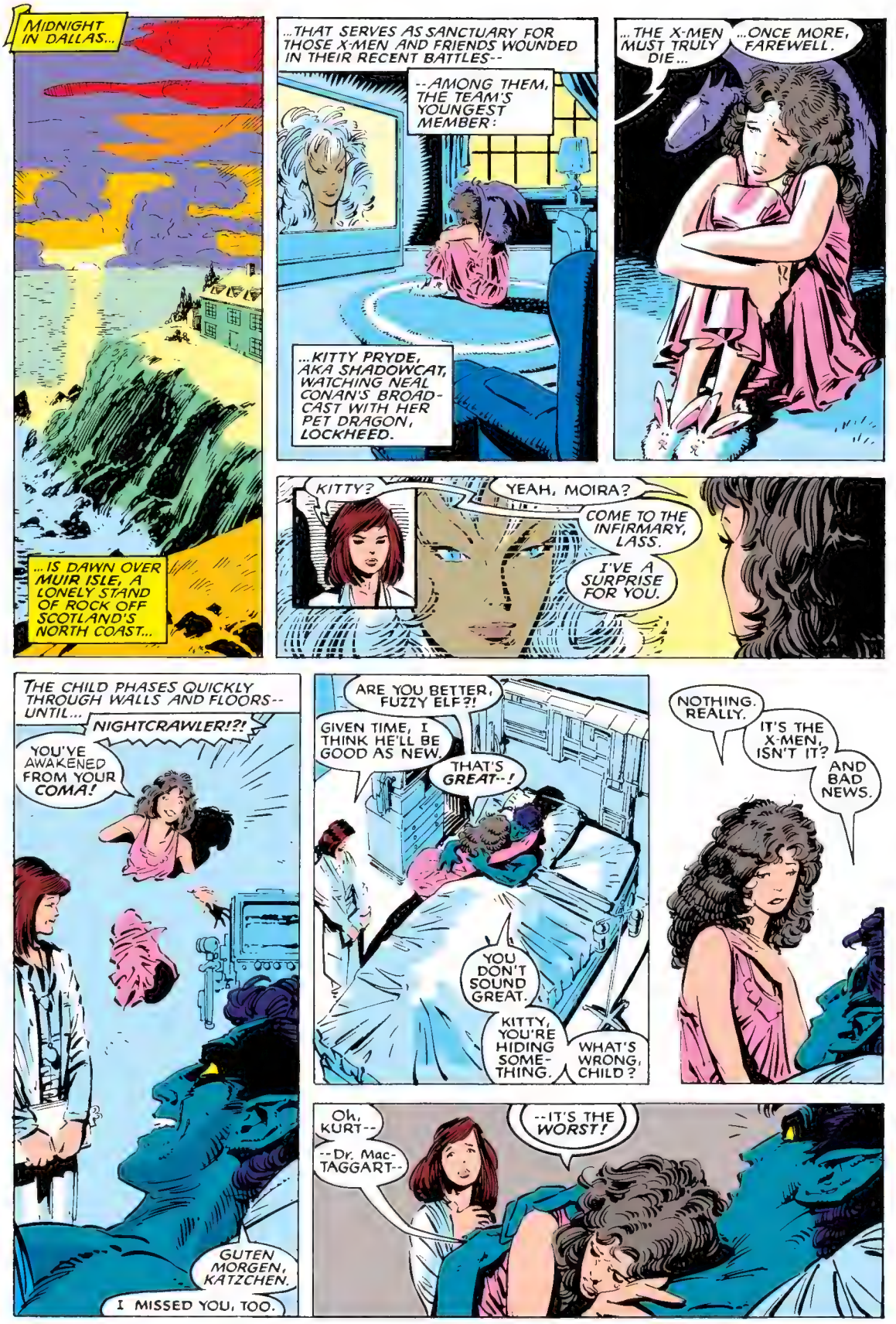

YOU'VE DONE YOUR PART--
-- LEAVE THE REST TO ME!
WOLVIE-- NO!
CUTTIN' HIM WON'T DO ANY GOOD!
SHE SPEAKS A'RIGHT, LITTLE MAN-- FOR IT IS NOT YOUR "CLAWS" THAT DO ME HARM...
...BUT THE SUBSTANCE THEY'RE MADE OF!
THWAM!
TO ME, YOUR UN-BREAKABLE ADAMANTIUM COUNTS AS LESS THAN NOTHING!
LONGSHOT'S BLADES ARE A STEEL ALLOY.
THEY CAUSED OUR FOE PAIN.
LOGICALLY, THEN, THE ADVERSARY MAY PROVE EVEN MORE VULNERABLE...
...TO MY LIVING STEEL ARMOR!
WHO--?!
I AM COLOSSUS, VILLAIN...
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE PART OF THIS GAME!
... AND WHERE STAND THE X-MEN...
...THERE STAND I!
BOSZHE MOI!?!
HIS BODY--
--THE DEMON SHEDS IT, LIKE A SNAKE HIS SKIN...
...TO REVEAL HIS TRUE FORM!
ROMA-- MY SLY SWEETLING...
...I DIDN'T THINK YOU HAD IT IN YOU!

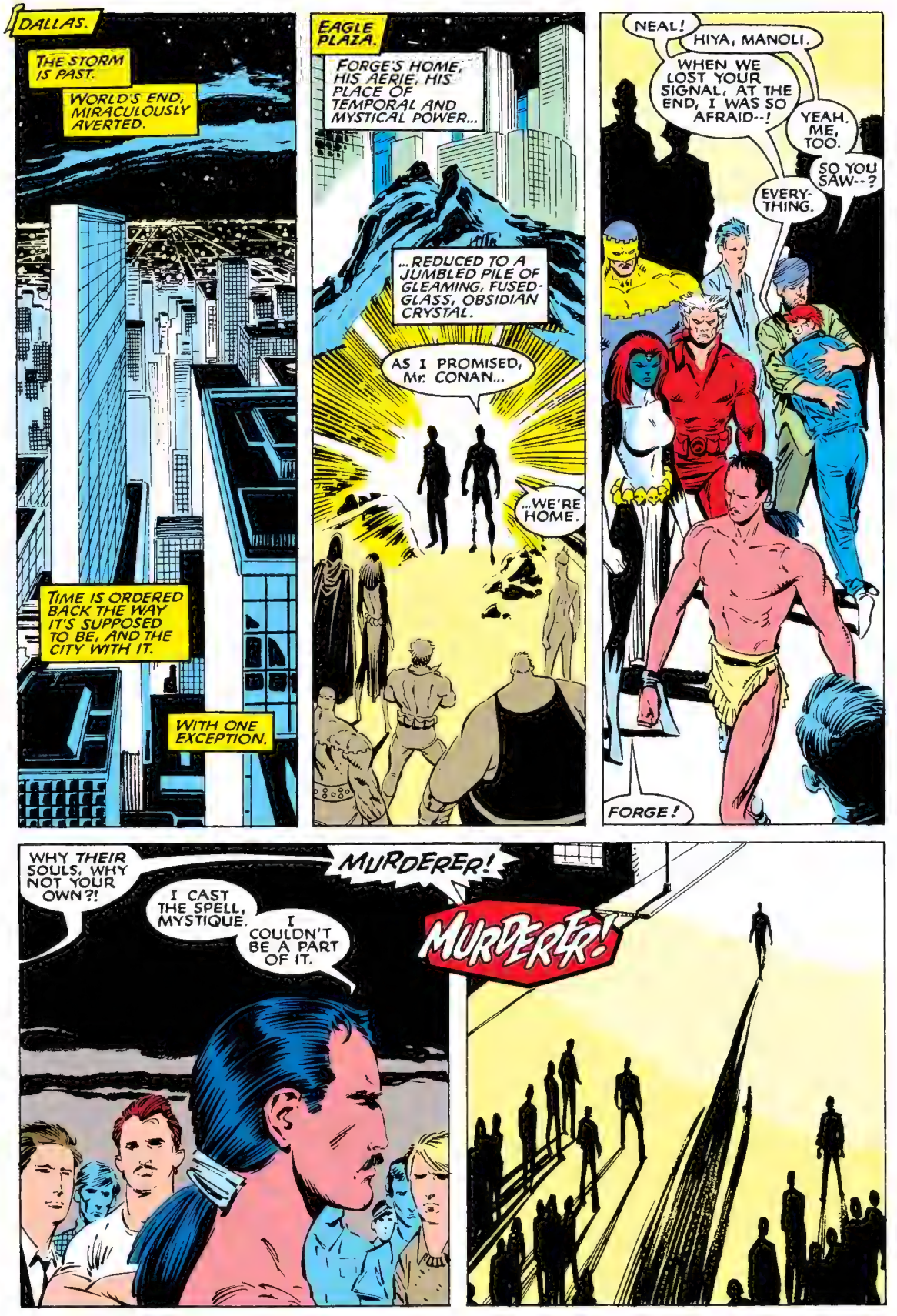
HOW SUPERB A JEST--TO TURN THE TABLES ON YOUR ADVERSARY, THE TRICKSTER, THE SUPREME DECEIVER--
--BY SNEAKING IN A RINGER!
PITY IT WON'T SAVE THE DAY.
SCRAP AIN'T FINISHED, UGLY.
FORGE'S OL' TEACHER, NAZE, FOUGHT YOU...
...WITH THESE SHAMANISTIC POWERS!
SINCE HIS WAS THE PSYCHE AH ABSORBED-- 'CAUSE YOU'D POSSESSED HIM--
--NOW THEY'RE MINE!
BUT ONLY TEMPORARILY, "SUGAR," ISN'T THAT SO? SOON, THEY'LL FADE. AND IN THE MEANTIME...
...WHILE YOU'VE SORCERY SUFFICIENT TO OPEN A PORTAL...
...YOU SADLY LACK THE WHEREWITHAL TO HURL ME THROUGH IT.
THE ADVERSARY'S HOLD ON THE CITADEL IS WEAKENING--
--WE'RE LOOSE.
YOU AND STORM, PERHAPS, FORGE--
--BUT NOT I.
SO LONG AS HE REMAINS...
...I REMAIN HIS PRISONER.
THEN, MY LADY ROMA--
-- WE SHALL HAVE TO CAST HIM OUT!
YOUR HURRICANE WINDS MAY WELL MOVE WORLDS, STORM--
--AND THESE LIGHTNING BOLTS SHATTER THEM TO DUST--
--BUT NOT ME!

WHAT'S HE SAYING--
--DOES STORM HAVE HER POWERS BACK?!
SURE LOOKS LIKE IT, AND THEN SOME!
PSYLOCKE, SHOW DAZZ TELEPATHICALLY WHERE TO SHOOT--
--THEN, PEOPLE, CUT LOOSE WITH EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT--
--IT'S ALL OR NOTHING!
HATE TO DISAPPOINT...
...BUT YOUR VERY BEST OR VERY WORST...
...IT WON'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
YOUR POWERS ARE PHYSICAL.
I'M NOT.
THAT'S WHY, IN THE END, YOU'LL LOSE.
MAGIC CAN BEAT HIM, X-MEN--
--POWER OF THE SPIRIT, AS WELL AS OF THE FLESH--
--AH SEE THAT CLEAR, IN NAZÉ'S MEM'RIES--
-- BUT HE DIDN'T HAVE THE STRENGTH...
...AN' NEITHER DO I!
FORGE DOES.
STRENGTH AND KNOWLEDGE BOTH...
...THAT AWARENESS PURE AS CRYSTAL IN HIS THOUGHTS.
THIS IS THE FOE--THE BATTLE--HE WAS CONSECRATED FROM BIRTH TO FIGHT!
NO!
FORGE--
--IF YOU HAVE THE SECRET, TELL US--
--IF YOU POSSESS THE SKILL...
...IN THE GODDESS'S NAME...
...USE IT!
I--
CAN'T!
CAN'T-- OR WON'T?
WHAT A GUY...
...SO FULL OF FEAR...
...OR SHAME--
--OR IS IT, VANITY--
...THAT HE'LL KEEP SILENT...
... EVEN IF IT MEANS HIS WORLD'S OBLITERATION!

I...
...UNDERSTAND.
FULL CIRCLE--IS IT NOT, FORGE--FOR YOU AND ME BOTH.
I SOUGHT TO CRAFT A *PLAN OMEGA*, WHEREBY THE X-MEN WOULD FAKE THEIR DEATHS, SO AS TO BE FREE TO STRIKE AT OUR FOES WITHOUT PLACING FRIENDS AND FAMILY AT RISK.
NOW, I AM CAUGHT UP MY OWN TREE, BY A LION WHO WILL NOT GO AWAY.
AND AS A CONSEQUENCE--
--THE X-MEN MUST TRULY DIE.
YES.
I...OPENED THE *GREAT GATE* WITH A SPELL BORN OF RAGE...
...BY HARNESSING THE SPIRITS OF THE NEWLY SLAIN--
--MY MEN, MY BUDDIES--
--WITHOUT THEIR PERMISSION, AGAINST THEIR WILL.
THE ONLY WAY IT CAN BE CLOSED IS WITH SOULFORCE FREELY GIVEN.
THE ADVERSARY WILL BE SEALED AWAY FOR ALL TIME--BUT IT WILL COST YOUR LIVES.
NEWSHOUND AIN'T PART O' THIS.
I'LL TAKE HIM HOME WITH ME.
ASSUMING YOU'RE SUCCESSFUL.
HAVE NO FEAR, HAVOK, THE SPELL WILL WORK--
--IF ALL THE PIECES ARE IN PLACE.
ONCE MORE, FAREWELL.
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN.
WHICH WILL NEVER BE.
NOT NECESSARILY.
FOR SUCH AS WE, MY LOVE...
...ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.
MADELYNE'S A CIVILIAN TOO, FORGE.
SHE BELONGS WITH HER HUSBAND AND KID.
I WISH THAT WAS POSSIBLE, WOLVERINE.
BUT THERE WERE NINE SOULS IN THE ORIGINAL ENCHANTMENT.
THERE HAVE TO BE NINE IN THIS.
I EXPECTED AS MUCH.
SCOTTY--
--WHEREVER YOU ARE, I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST.
FIND OUR SON. KEEP HIM SAFE. RAISE HIM WELL.
I LOVE YOU.
GOODBYE.

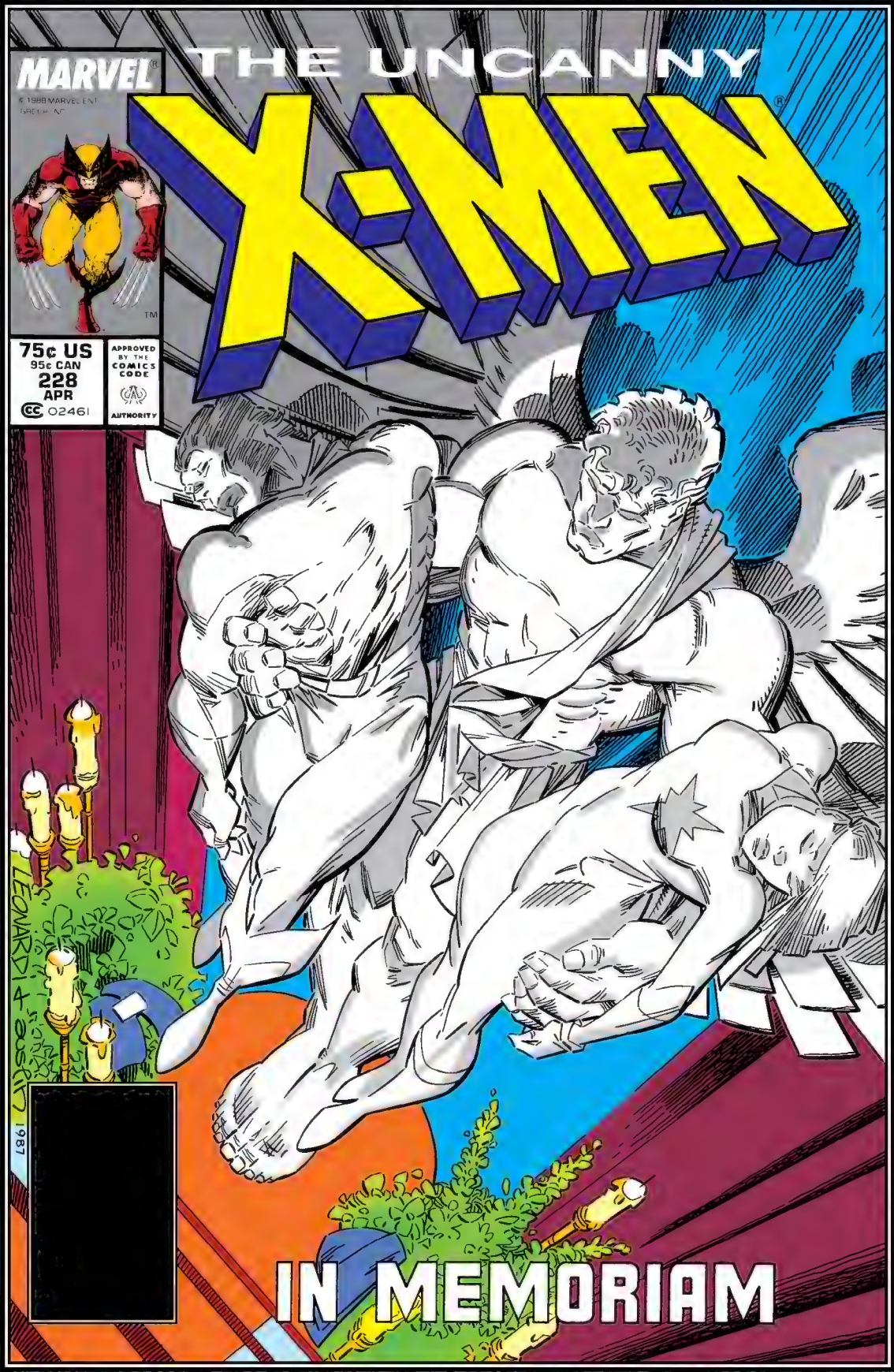

"FORGE STARTS CHANTING...
"...AND SOMEHOW, HIS WORDS--THE VERY SOUNDS THEMSELVES--TAKE ON A PALPABLE, PHYSICAL FORCE. HE GESTURES...
"...AND THE X-MEN TRANSFORM...
"...INTO BEINGS OF PURE ENERGY.
"THEN, FORGE GATHERS THEM INTO A SINGLE MASS--LIKE A MINIATURE *STAR*...
"...TOO BRIGHT TO LOOK AT...
"...YET HE GAZES INTO ITS HEART WITH WIDE-OPEN EYES.
"I'M CRYING, MANOLI--
"--SO IS HE--
"--AS HIS VOICE GROWS IMPOSSIBLY LOUDER THAN THE ADVERSARY'S LAUGHTER--
"--MOCKING, TRIUMPHANT, WHAT'S SO FUNNY, IT'S ALMOST AS THOUGH *HE'S* ABOUT TO WIN--
"--UNTIL FINALLY, WITH A FIERCE WAR CRY...
"...THE STAR IS THROWN!
"AND, JUST LIKE THAT...
"...IT'S *OVER.*"
THE SCALES ARE BALANCED.
THE GHOSTS ARE GONE, THE SPIRITS OF MY FRIENDS FINALLY FREE TO REST IN PEACE.
BUT I TELL YOU, ROMA...
...THE PRICE NOW, AS THEN...
...ISN'T WORTH THE VICTORY.


MIDNIGHT IN DALLAS...
...IS DAWN OVER MUIR ISLE, A LONELY STAND OF ROCK OFF SCOTLAND'S NORTH COAST...
...THAT SERVES AS SANCTUARY FOR THOSE X-MEN AND FRIENDS WOUNDED IN THEIR RECENT BATTLES--
--AMONG THEM, THE TEAM'S YOUNGEST MEMBER:
...KITTY PRYDE, AKA SHADOWCAT, WATCHING NEAL CONAN'S BROADCAST WITH HER PET DRAGON, LOCKHEED.
...THE X-MEN MUST TRULY DIE...
...ONCE MORE, FAREWELL.
KITTY?
YEAH, MOIRA?
COME TO THE INFIRMARY, LASS.
I'VE A SURPRISE FOR YOU.
THE CHILD PHASES QUICKLY THROUGH WALLS AND FLOORS-- UNTIL...
NIGHTCRAWLER!?!
YOU'VE AWAKENED FROM YOUR COMA!
GUTEN MORGEN, KATZCHEN.
I MISSED YOU, TOO.
ARE YOU BETTER, FUZZY ELF?!
GIVEN TIME, I THINK HE'LL BE GOOD AS NEW.
THAT'S GREAT--!
YOU DON'T SOUND GREAT.
KITTY, YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING.
WHAT'S WRONG, CHILD?
NOTHING. REALLY.
IT'S THE X-MEN, ISN'T IT?
AND BAD NEWS.
Oh, KURT--
--Dr. MacTAGGART--
--IT'S THE WORST!


DALLAS.
THE STORM IS PAST.
WORLD'S END, MIRACULOUSLY AVERTED.
TIME IS ORDERED BACK THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE, AND THE CITY WITH IT.
WITH ONE EXCEPTION.
EAGLE PLAZA.
FORGE'S HOME, HIS AERIE, HIS PLACE OF TEMPORAL AND MYSTICAL POWER...
...REDUCED TO A JUMBLED PILE OF GLEAMING, FUSED-GLASS, OBSIDIAN CRYSTAL.
AS I PROMISED, Mr. CONAN...
...WE'RE HOME.
NEAL!
HIYA, MANOLI.
WHEN WE LOST YOUR SIGNAL, AT THE END, I WAS SO AFRAID--!
YEAH. ME, TOO.
SO YOU SAW--?
EVERY-THING.
FORGE!
WHY THEIR SOULS, WHY NOT YOUR OWN?!
I CAST THE SPELL, MYSTIQUE.
I COULDN'T BE A PART OF IT.
MURDERER!
MURDERER!

ROMA'S STARLIGHT CITADEL--
--BEYOND SPACE AND TIME...
...YET ABLE TO PERCEIVE AND ACCESS ETERNITY.
BY THE STANDARDS OF HER RACE, THE MISTRESS HERE IS HARDLY OLDER THAN KITTY--EVEN THOUGH THAT LIFESPAN FAR OUTSTRIPS THE EARTH'S.
YET, IN TO HER HANDS HAS BEEN GIVEN...
...THE GUARDIANSHIP OF REALITY.
AS SUCH, VIRTUALLY NOTHING...
...IS BEYOND HER POWER.
ALIVE?!?
BUT--
--I THOUGHT--
--HAS FORGE'S SPELL FAILED?!!
NO, STORM.
BUT SUCH A GATE AS THIS--SUCH A BEING AS THE ADVERSARY--CAN NEVER, MUST NEVER, BE LOCKED AWAY FOREVER.
FOR FROM SUCH PRIMAL CHAOS COMES CHANGE. AND FROM CHANGE, GROWTH.
FOUL AND CRUEL THOUGH HE MAY BE...
...THE UNIVERSE NEEDS HIM.
LIFE NEEDS HIM.
HE IS BOUND FOR AN AGE--SUFFICIENT PUNISHMENT FOR HIS TRANSGRESSIONS--AND YOU X-MEN, REALITY'S CHAMPIONS, ARE ENTITLED TO A REWARD COMMENSURATE WITH YOUR SACRIFICE.
YOU LITERALLY HOLD YOUR FUTURE, YOUR FATE, IN YOUR HANDS.
I CAN RETURN YOU TO YOUR EARTH, AT THE MOMENT YOU LEFT IT, FREE TO PICK UP YOUR LIVES AS BEFORE, OR BEGIN THEM ANEW.
OR TRANSPORT YOU TO ANY OTHER WORLD, ANY ERA, ANY REALITY.

STRIKES ME, ORORO, YOUR "PLAN OMEGA" MAY HAVE WORKED AFTER ALL.
IF EVERYONE FIGURES US DEAD...
YOU DID DIE, MY FRIEND. THE INSTANT FORGE CAST HIS SPELL...
...YOUR LIFE-LINES WERE BROKEN.
WHAT YOU UNDERGO NOW IS A REBIRTH.
WHATEVER--
--MAYBE IT'S THE OPPORTUNITY WE WANTED TO ACT WITH A LOT MORE FREEDOM THAN BEFORE.
BUT WHAT ABOUT OUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS?! HOW CAN WE NOT TELL THEM WE'RE ALIVE?!
THAT'S TOO UNFAIR, WOLVERINE-- TOO CRUEL!
AND IF WE DO AS YOU ASK, ALISON, HOW THEN DO WE PROTECT THEM?
WHICH IS BETTER, BLONDIE-- HURTIN' THEM THIS WAY...
...OR BURYIN' THEM, 'CAUSE THEY GOT CHOPPED IN THE CROSSFIRE?
SHOULD NOT THE NEEDS OF THE MANY, MY FRIENDS...
...TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE DESIRES OF THE FEW?
BIG GUY'S RIGHT, PEOPLE.
WE GOT A LOT OF SCORES TO SETTLE. I VOTE WE START PAYIN' 'EM BACK, WITH INTEREST!
IF THIS IS THE WAY WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE...
...PLEASE, LET'S DO IT!
THEN YOU ARE AGREED.
AND THAT IS FOR THE BEST.
I SALUTE YOU, X-MEN--
--MAGNIFICENT THOUGH YOU WERE AS HEROES, ALL A PERSON MIGHT WISH TO BE, NOW YOU CAN DO MUCH MORE...
...BECAUSE YOU HAVE BECOME LEGENDS!
NEXT: A NEW BEGINNING DOWN UNDER!


MARVEL
© 1988 MARVEL ENT
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
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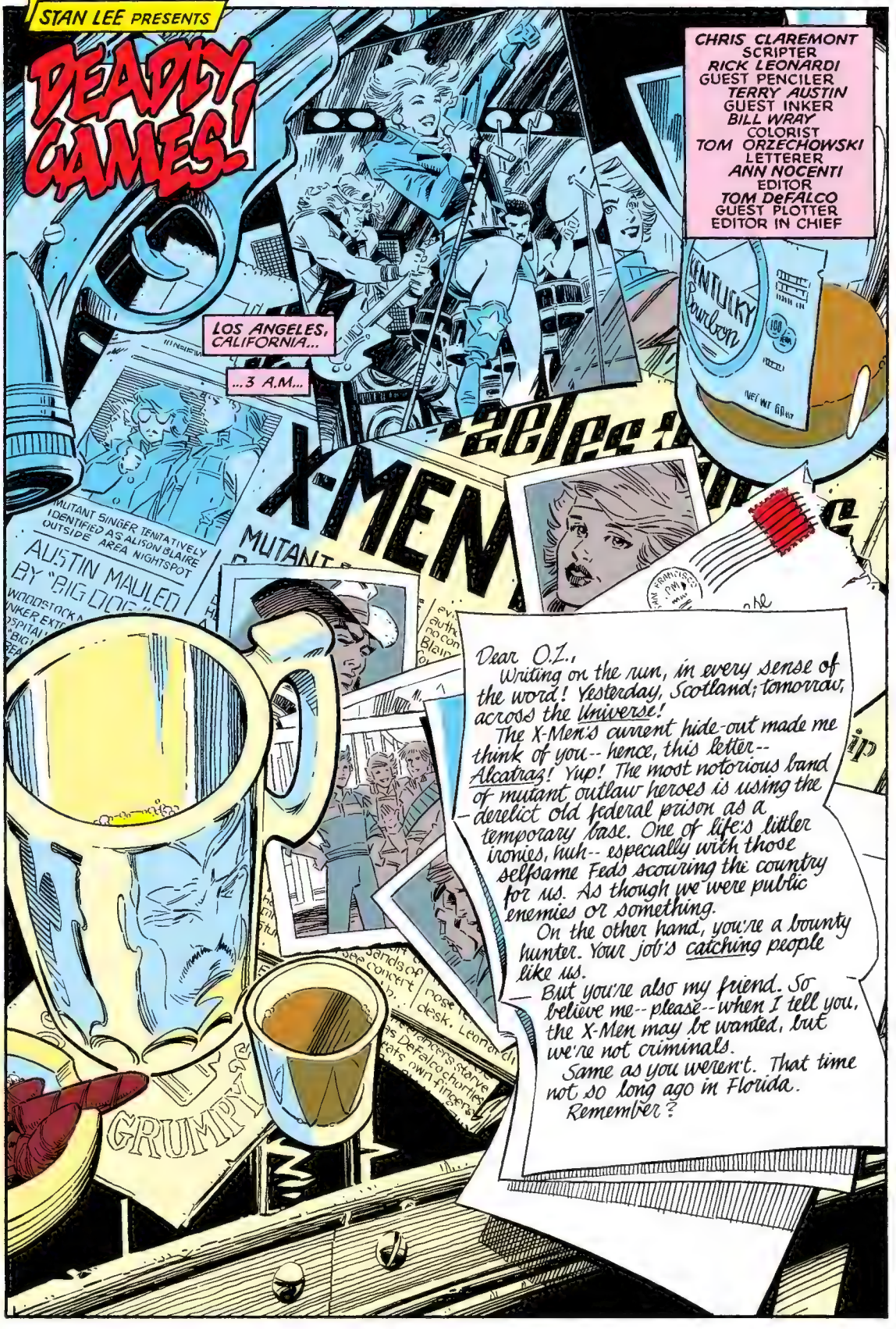
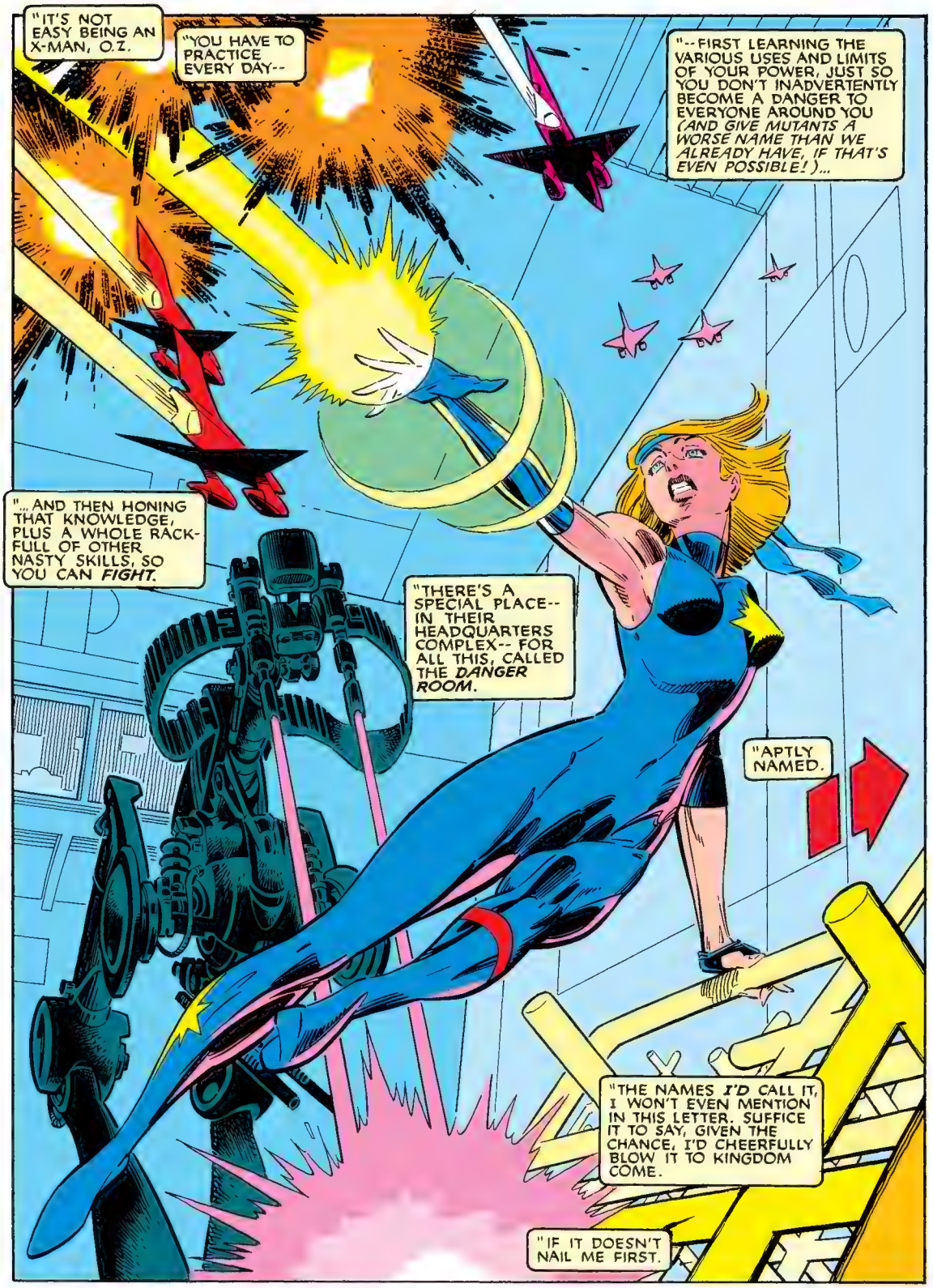
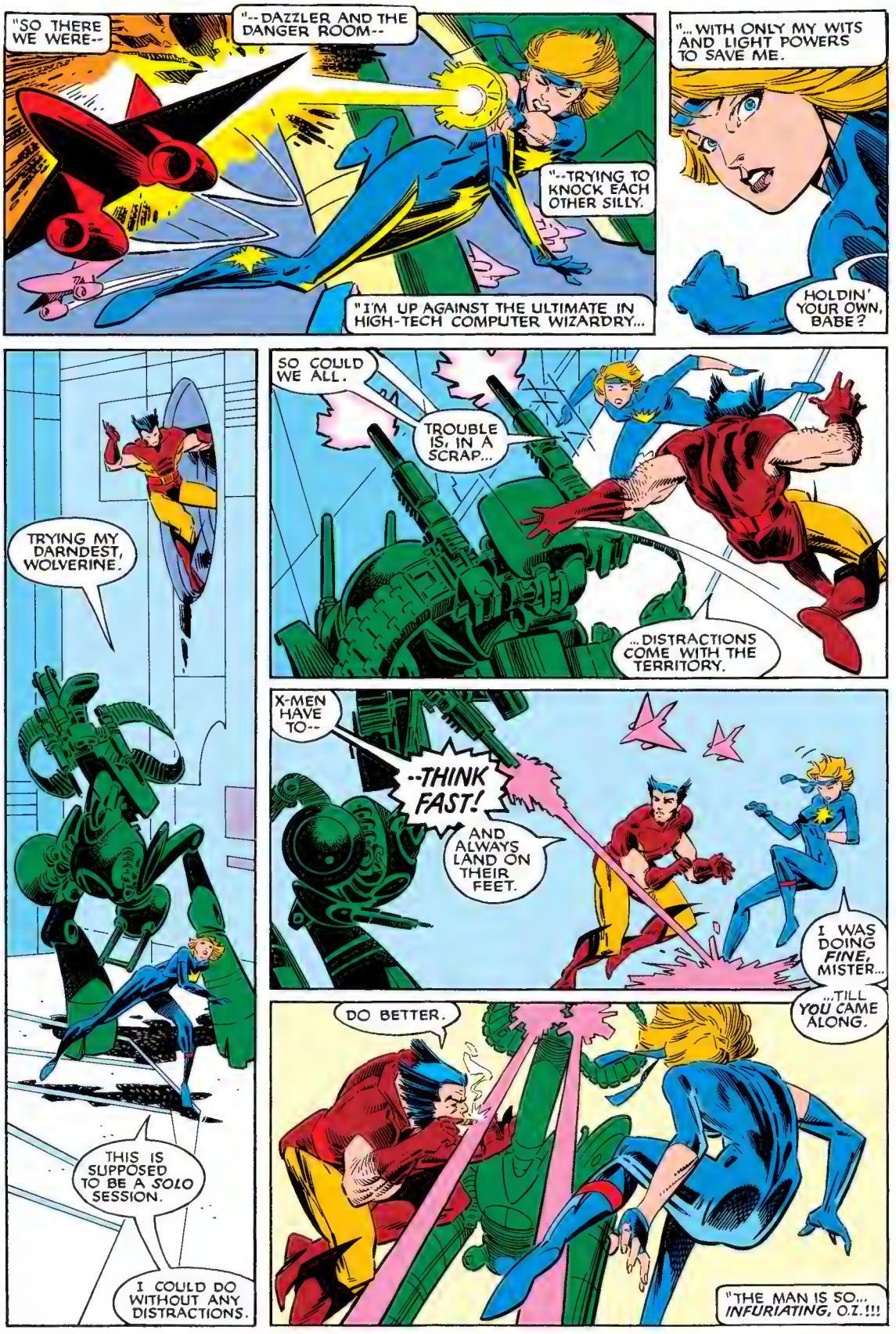
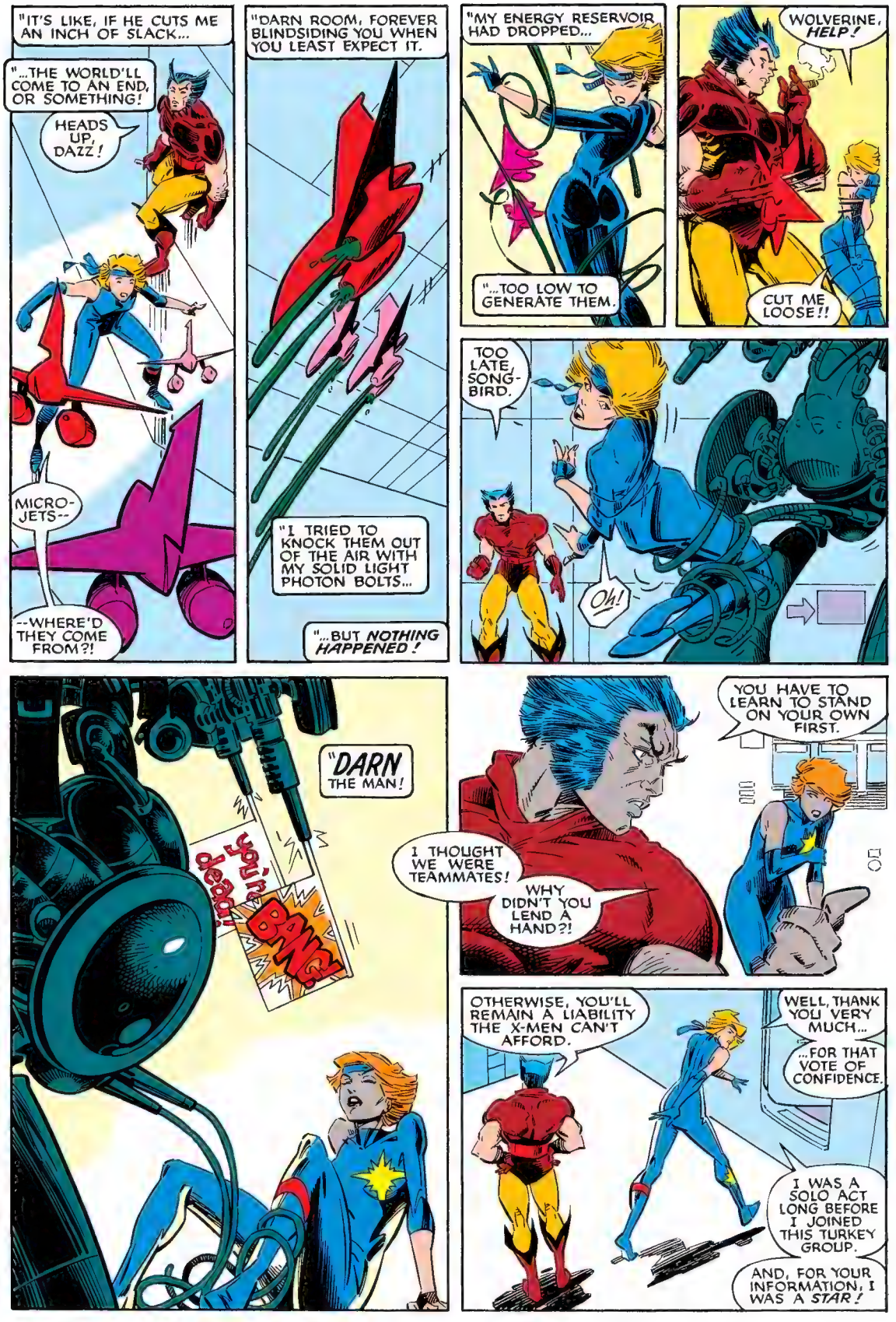
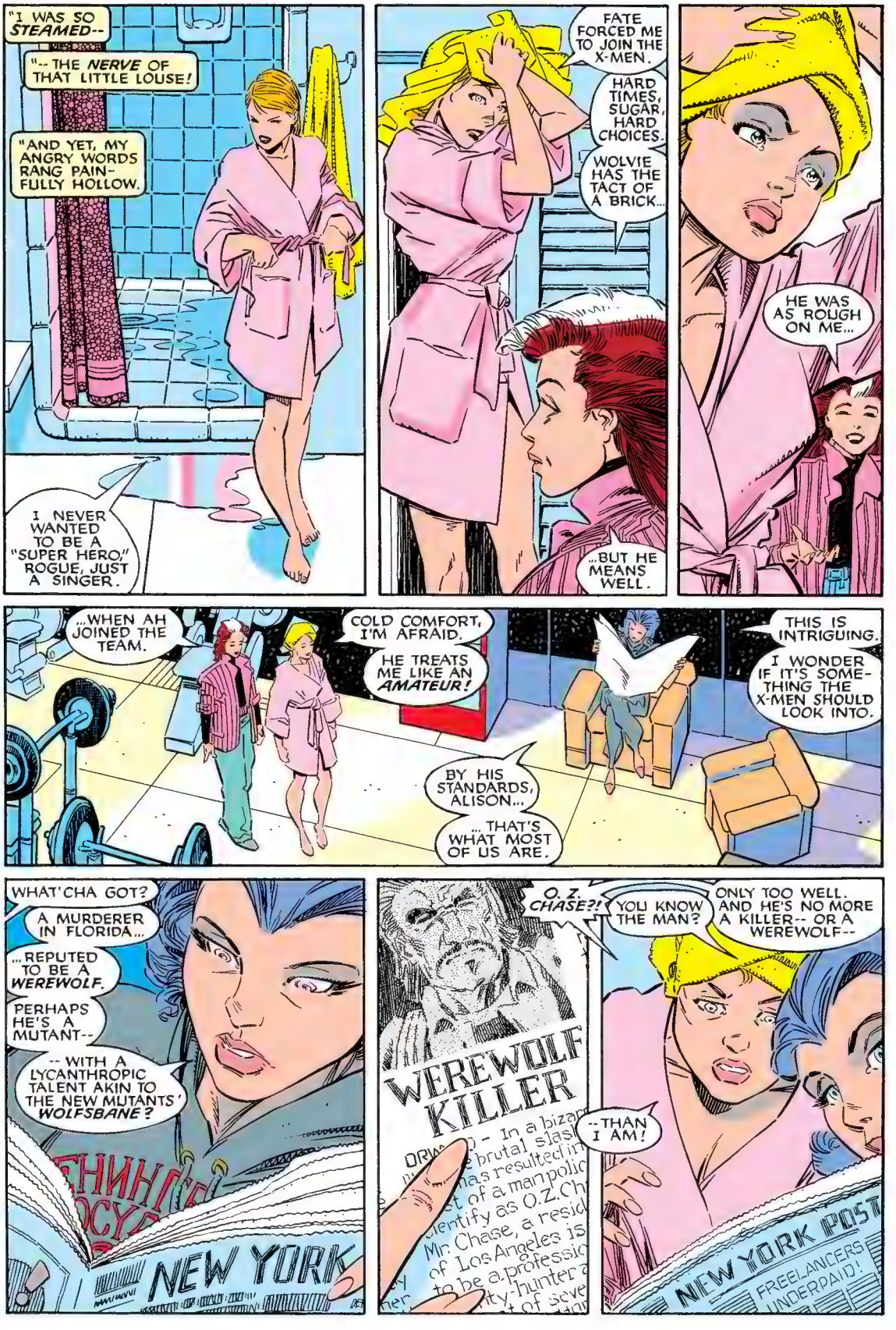
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE
AUTHORITY
LEONARDI 4 ASCIUTTO 1987
IN MEMORIAM

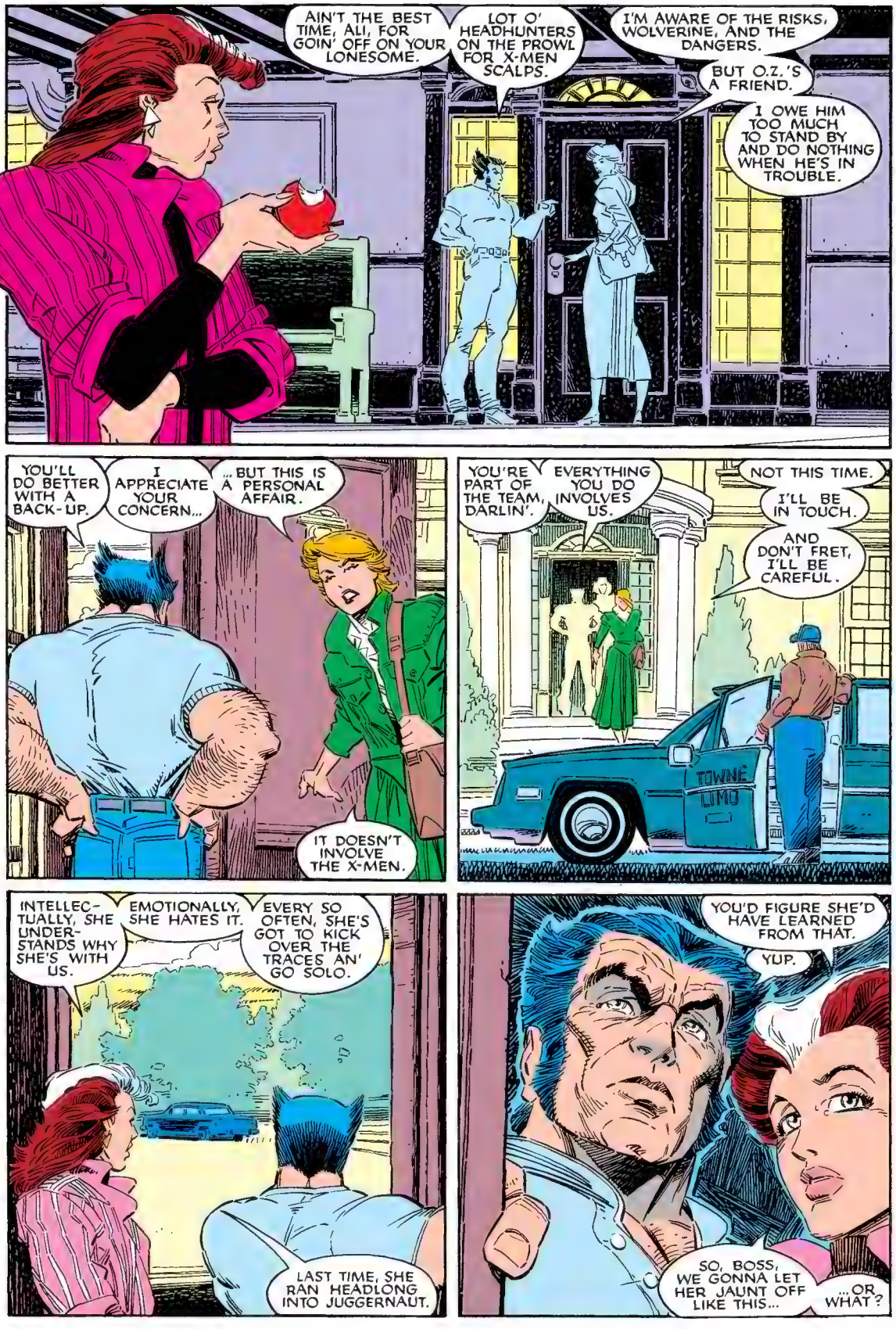

STAN LEE PRESENTS
DEADLY GAMES!
CHRIS CLAREMONT
SCRIPTER
RICK LEONARDI
GUEST PENCILER
TERRY AUSTIN
GUEST INKER
BILL WRAY
COLORIST
TOM ORZECHOWSKI
LETTERER
ANN NOCENTI
EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO
GUEST PLOTTER
EDITOR IN CHIEF
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA...
...3 A.M...
X-MEN
MUTANT SINGER TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED AS ALISON BLAIRE OUTSIDE AREA NIGHTSPOT
AUSTIN MAULED BY "BIG DOG"
Dear O.Z.,
Writing on the run, in every sense of the word! Yesterday, Scotland; tomorrow, across the Universe!
The X-Men's current hide-out made me think of you -- hence, this letter -- Alcatraz! Yup! The most notorious band of mutant outlaw heroes is using the derelict old federal prison as a temporary base. One of life's littler ironies, huh -- especially with those selfsame Feds scouring the country for us. As though we were public enemies or something.
On the other hand, you're a bounty hunter. Your job's catching people like us.
But you're also my friend. So believe me -- please -- when I tell you, the X-Men may be wanted, but we're not criminals.
Same as you weren't. That time not so long ago in Florida.
Remember?

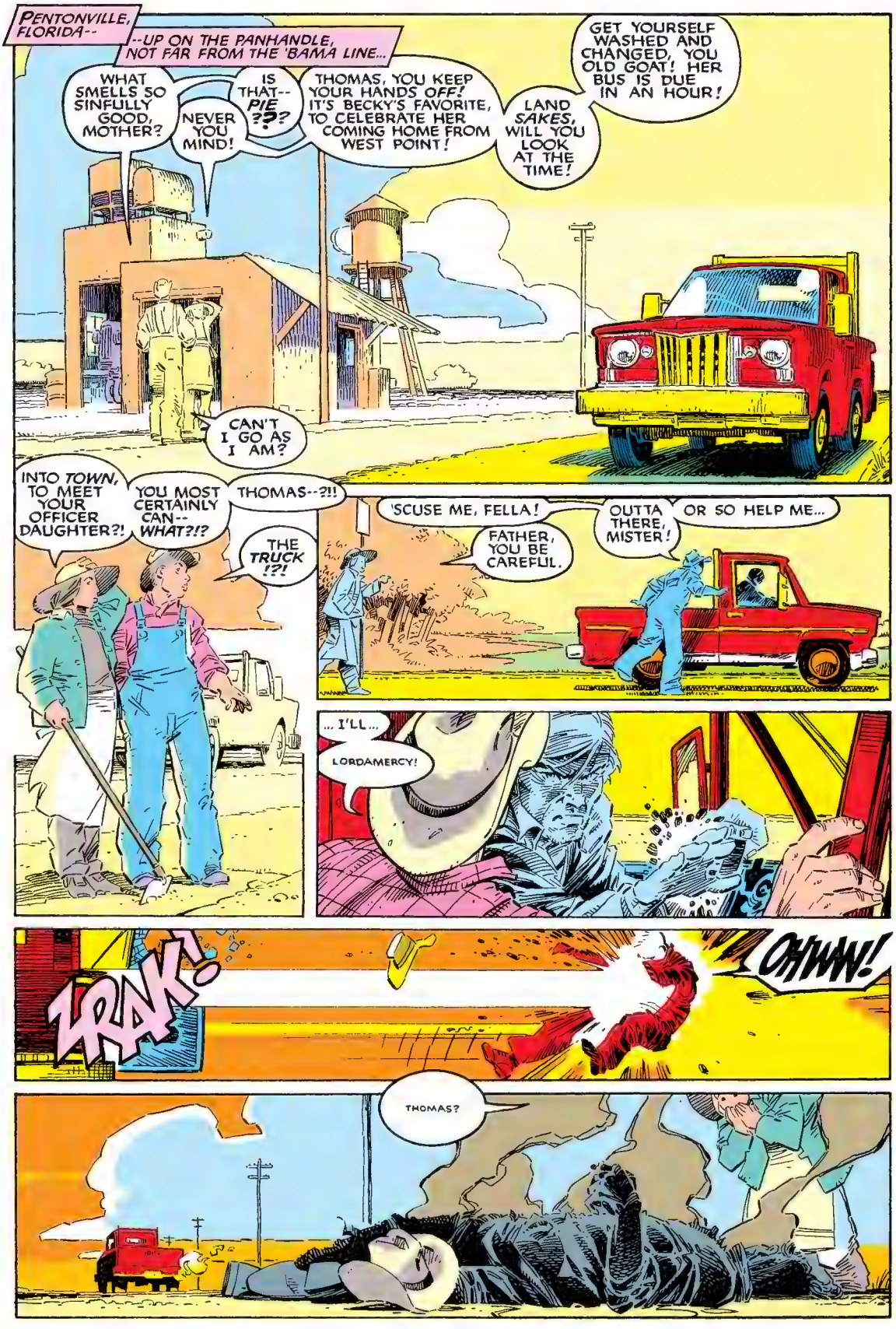

"IT'S NOT EASY BEING AN X-MAN, O.Z.
"YOU HAVE TO PRACTICE EVERY DAY--
"--FIRST LEARNING THE VARIOUS USES AND LIMITS OF YOUR POWER, JUST SO YOU DON'T INADVERTENTLY BECOME A DANGER TO EVERYONE AROUND YOU (AND GIVE MUTANTS A WORSE NAME THAN WE ALREADY HAVE, IF THAT'S EVEN POSSIBLE!)...
"...AND THEN HONING THAT KNOWLEDGE, PLUS A WHOLE RACK-FULL OF OTHER NASTY SKILLS, SO YOU CAN *FIGHT*.
"THERE'S A SPECIAL PLACE-- IN THEIR HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX-- FOR ALL THIS, CALLED THE *DANGER ROOM*.
"APTLY NAMED.
"THE NAMES *I'D* CALL IT, I WON'T EVEN MENTION IN THIS LETTER. SUFFICE IT TO SAY, GIVEN THE CHANCE, I'D CHEERFULLY BLOW IT TO KINGDOM COME.
"IF IT DOESN'T NAIL ME FIRST.

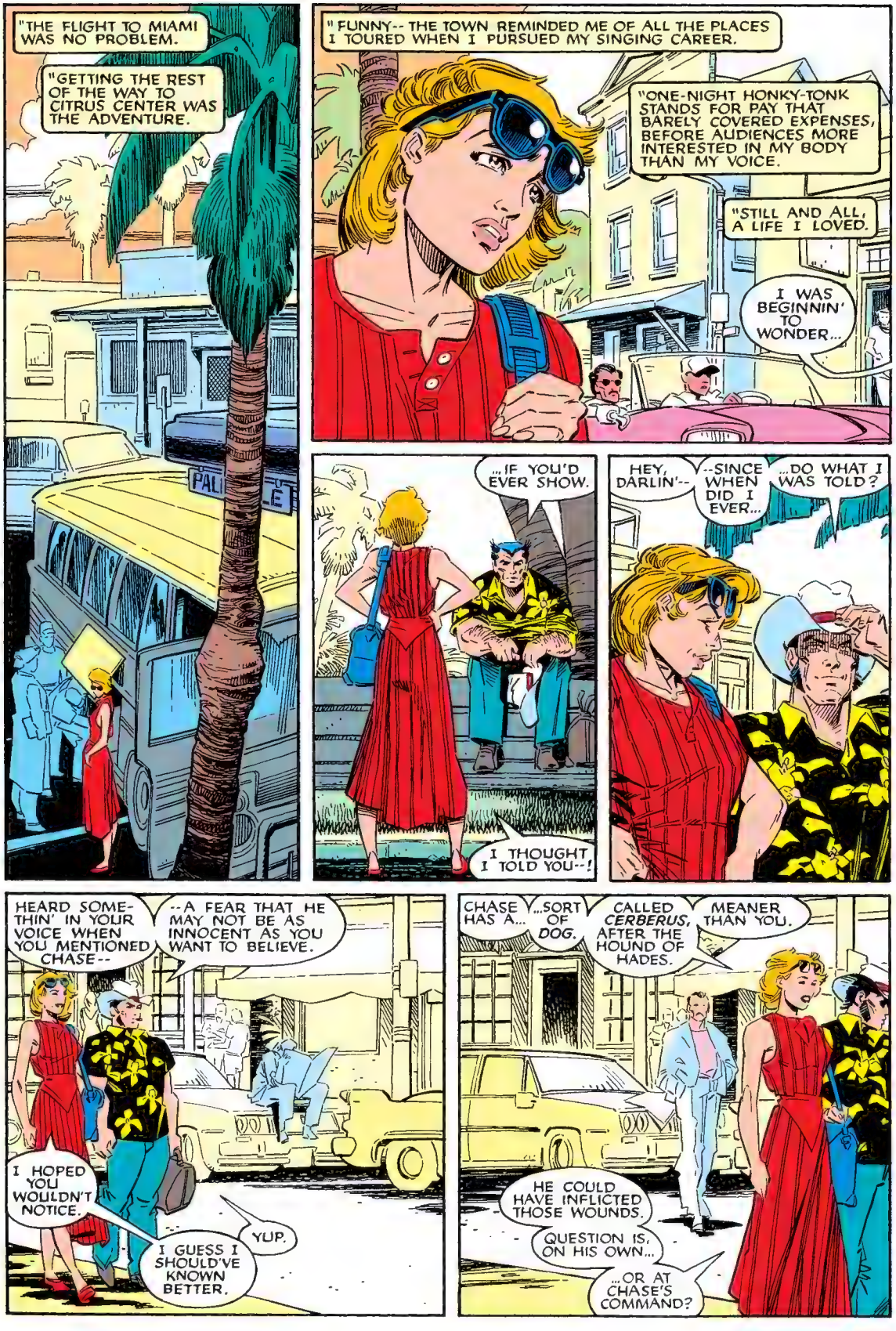

"SO THERE WE WERE--
"--DAZZLER AND THE DANGER ROOM--
"--TRYING TO KNOCK EACH OTHER SILLY.
"I'M UP AGAINST THE ULTIMATE IN HIGH-TECH COMPUTER WIZARDRY...
"...WITH ONLY MY WITS AND LIGHT POWERS TO SAVE ME.
HOLDIN' YOUR OWN, BABE?
TRYING MY DARNDEST, WOLVERINE.
THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A SOLO SESSION.
I COULD DO WITHOUT ANY DISTRACTIONS.
SO COULD WE ALL.
TROUBLE IS, IN A SCRAP...
...DISTRACTIONS COME WITH THE TERRITORY.
X-MEN HAVE TO--
--THINK FAST!
AND ALWAYS LAND ON THEIR FEET.
I WAS DOING FINE, MISTER...
...TILL YOU CAME ALONG.
DO BETTER.
"THE MAN IS SO... INFURIATING, O.Z.!!!


"IT'S LIKE, IF HE CUTS ME AN INCH OF SLACK...
"...THE WORLD'LL COME TO AN END, OR SOMETHING!
HEADS UP, DAZZ!
MICRO-JETS--
--WHERE'D THEY COME FROM?!
"DARN ROOM, FOREVER BLINDSIDING YOU WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT.
"I TRIED TO KNOCK THEM OUT OF THE AIR WITH MY SOLID LIGHT PHOTON BOLTS...
"...BUT NOTHING HAPPENED!
"MY ENERGY RESERVOIR HAD DROPPED...
"...TOO LOW TO GENERATE THEM.
WOLVERINE, HELP!
CUT ME LOOSE!!
TOO LATE, SONG-BIRD.
Oh!
"DARN THE MAN!
you're dead!
BANG
I THOUGHT WE WERE TEAMMATES!
WHY DIDN'T YOU LEND A HAND?!
YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO STAND ON YOUR OWN FIRST.
OTHERWISE, YOU'LL REMAIN A LIABILITY THE X-MEN CAN'T AFFORD.
WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH...
...FOR THAT VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.
I WAS A SOLO ACT LONG BEFORE I JOINED THIS TURKEY GROUP.
AND, FOR YOUR INFORMATION, I WAS A STAR!

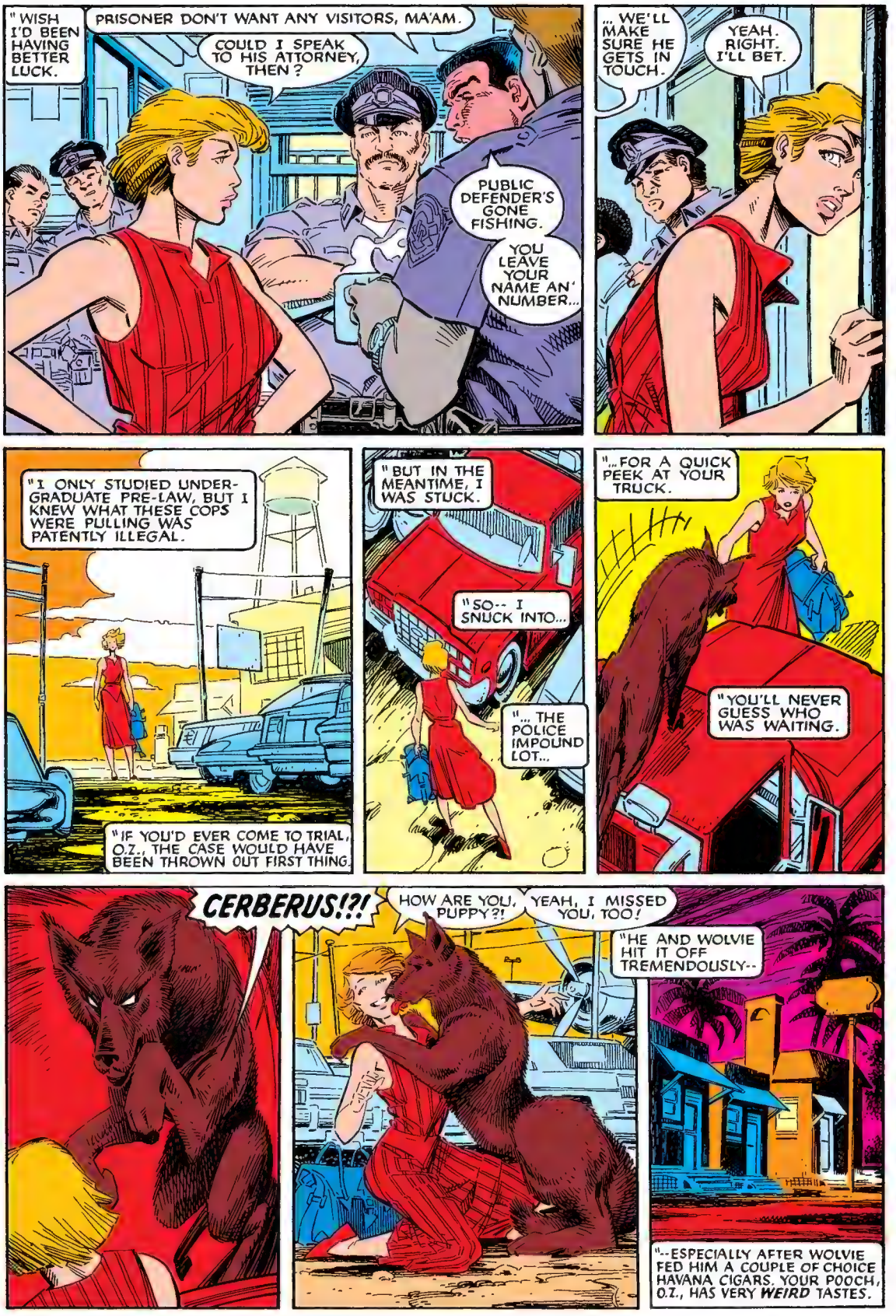

"I WAS SO STEAMED--
"-- THE NERVE OF THAT LITTLE LOUSE!
"AND YET, MY ANGRY WORDS RANG PAIN-FULLY HOLLOW.
I NEVER WANTED TO BE A "SUPER HERO," ROGUE, JUST A SINGER.
FATE FORCED ME TO JOIN THE X-MEN.
HARD TIMES, SUGAR, HARD CHOICES.
WOLVIE HAS THE TACT OF A BRICK...
...BUT HE MEANS WELL.
HE WAS AS ROUGH ON ME...
...WHEN AH JOINED THE TEAM.
COLD COMFORT, I'M AFRAID.
HE TREATS ME LIKE AN AMATEUR!
BY HIS STANDARDS, ALISON...
...THAT'S WHAT MOST OF US ARE.
THIS IS INTRIGUING.
I WONDER IF IT'S SOME-THING THE X-MEN SHOULD LOOK INTO.
WHAT'CHA GOT?
A MURDERER IN FLORIDA...
...REPUTED TO BE A WEREWOLF.
PERHAPS HE'S A MUTANT--
-- WITH A LYCANTHROPIC TALENT AKIN TO THE NEW MUTANTS' WOLFSBANE?
NEW YORK
O.Z. CHASE?!
WEREWOLF KILLER
YOU KNOW THE MAN?
ONLY TOO WELL. AND HE'S NO MORE A KILLER-- OR A WEREWOLF--
--THAN I AM!
NEW YORK POST
FREELANCERS UNDERPAID!

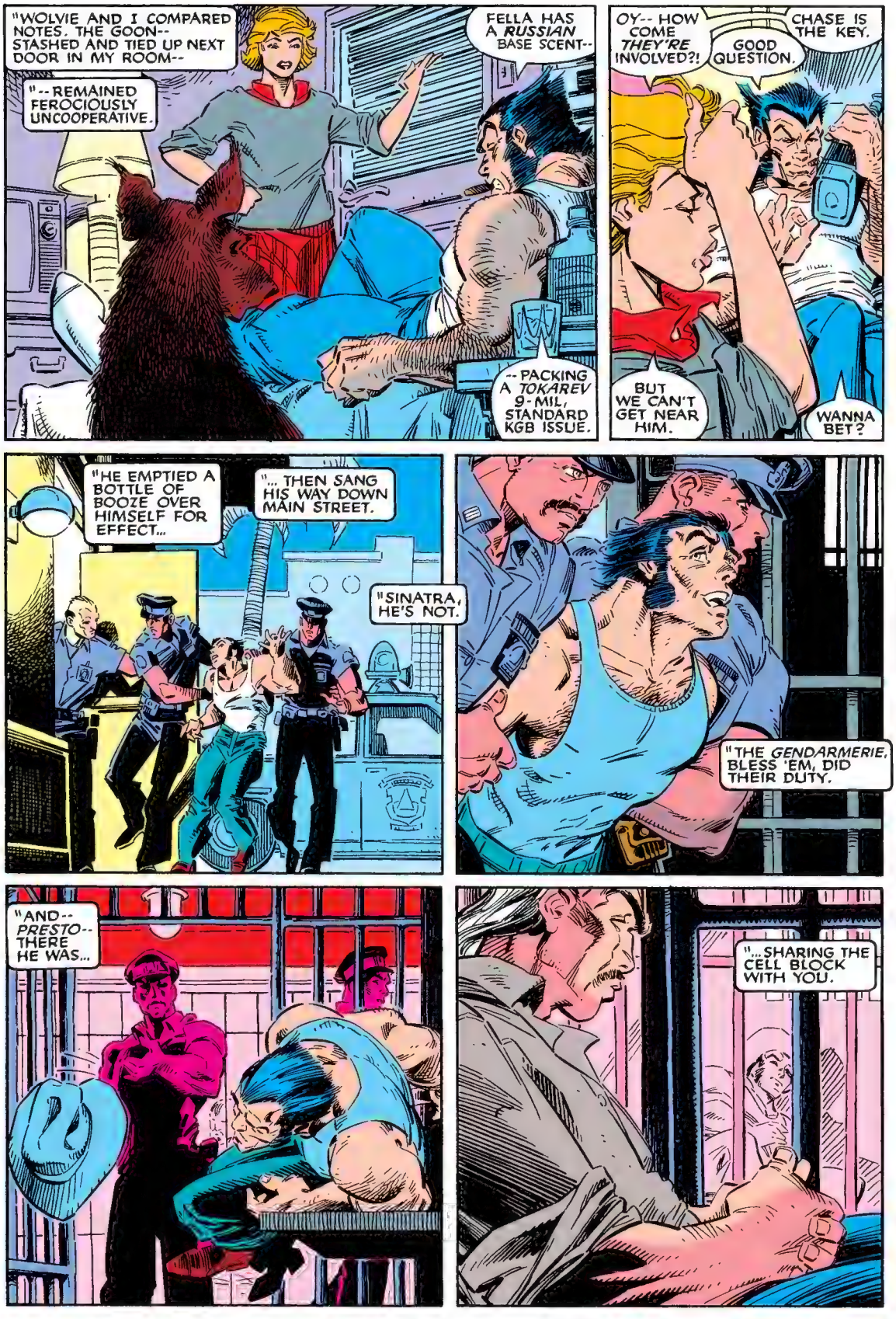

AIN'T THE BEST TIME, ALI, FOR GOIN' OFF ON YOUR LONESOME.
LOT O' HEADHUNTERS ON THE PROWL FOR X-MEN SCALPS.
I'M AWARE OF THE RISKS, WOLVERINE, AND THE DANGERS.
BUT O.Z.'S A FRIEND.
I OWE HIM TOO MUCH TO STAND BY AND DO NOTHING WHEN HE'S IN TROUBLE.
YOU'LL DO BETTER WITH A BACK-UP.
I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN...
...BUT THIS IS A PERSONAL AFFAIR.
IT DOESN'T INVOLVE THE X-MEN.
YOU'RE PART OF THE TEAM, DARLIN'.
EVERYTHING YOU DO INVOLVES US.
NOT THIS TIME.
I'LL BE IN TOUCH.
AND DON'T FRET, I'LL BE CAREFUL.
TOWNE LIMO
INTELLECTUALLY, SHE UNDERSTANDS WHY SHE'S WITH US.
EMOTIONALLY, SHE HATES IT.
EVERY SO OFTEN, SHE'S GOT TO KICK OVER THE TRACES AN' GO SOLO.
LAST TIME, SHE RAN HEADLONG INTO JUGGERNAUT.
YOU'D FIGURE SHE'D HAVE LEARNED FROM THAT.
YUP.
SO, BOSS, WE GONNA LET HER JAUNT OFF LIKE THIS...
...OR WHAT?

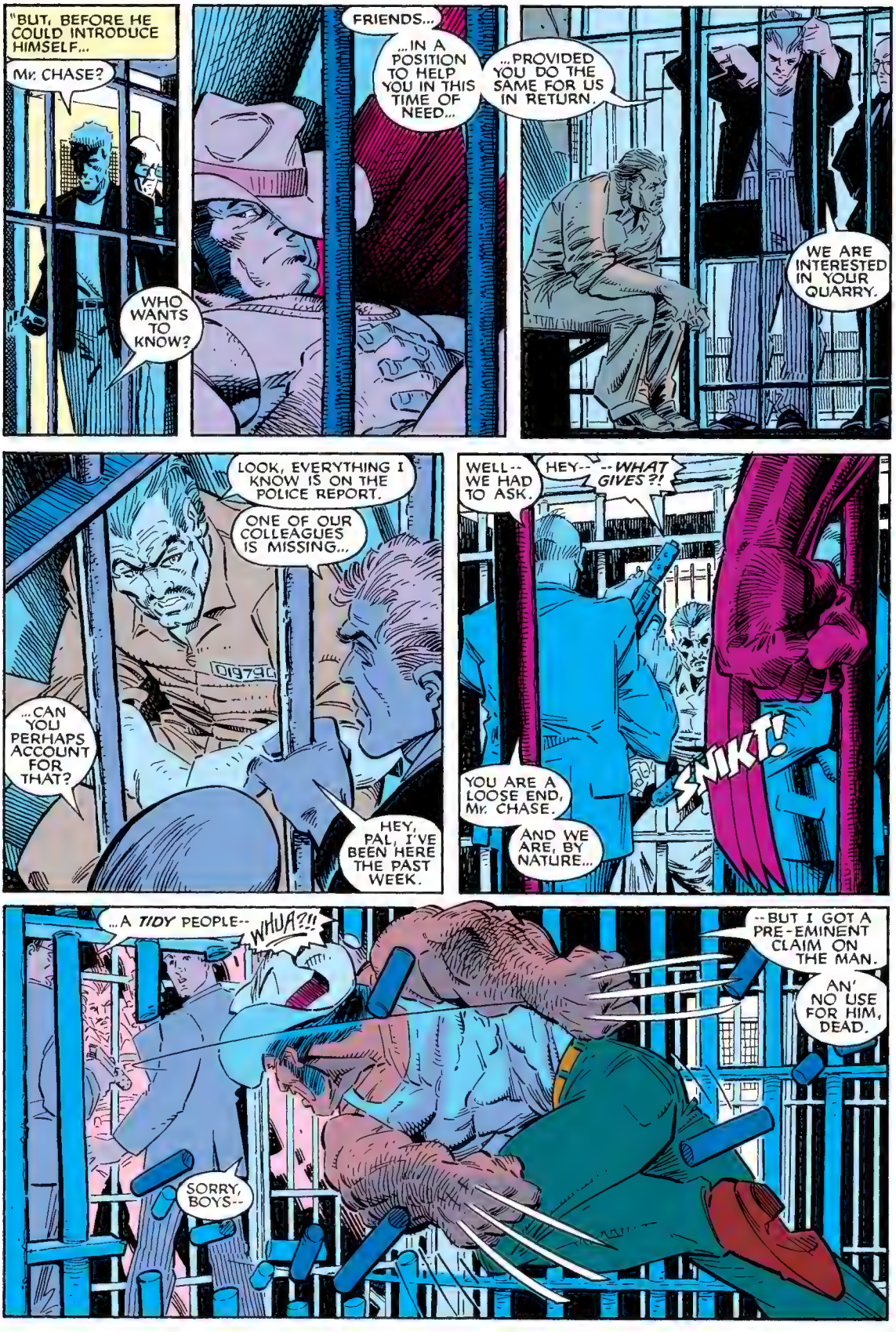

PENTONVILLE, FLORIDA--
--UP ON THE PANHANDLE, NOT FAR FROM THE 'BAMA LINE...
WHAT SMELLS SO SINFULLY GOOD, MOTHER?
NEVER YOU MIND!
IS THAT-- PIE ??
THOMAS, YOU KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF! IT'S BECKY'S FAVORITE, TO CELEBRATE HER COMING HOME FROM WEST POINT!
LAND SAKES, WILL YOU LOOK AT THE TIME!
GET YOURSELF WASHED AND CHANGED, YOU OLD GOAT! HER BUS IS DUE IN AN HOUR!
CAN'T I GO AS I AM?
INTO TOWN, TO MEET YOUR OFFICER DAUGHTER?!
YOU MOST CERTAINLY CAN-- WHAT?!?
THOMAS--?!!
THE TRUCK !?!
'SCUSE ME, FELLA!
FATHER, YOU BE CAREFUL.
OUTTA THERE, MISTER!
OR SO HELP ME...
... I'LL ...
LORDAMERCY!
KRAK!
OHWW!
THOMAS?

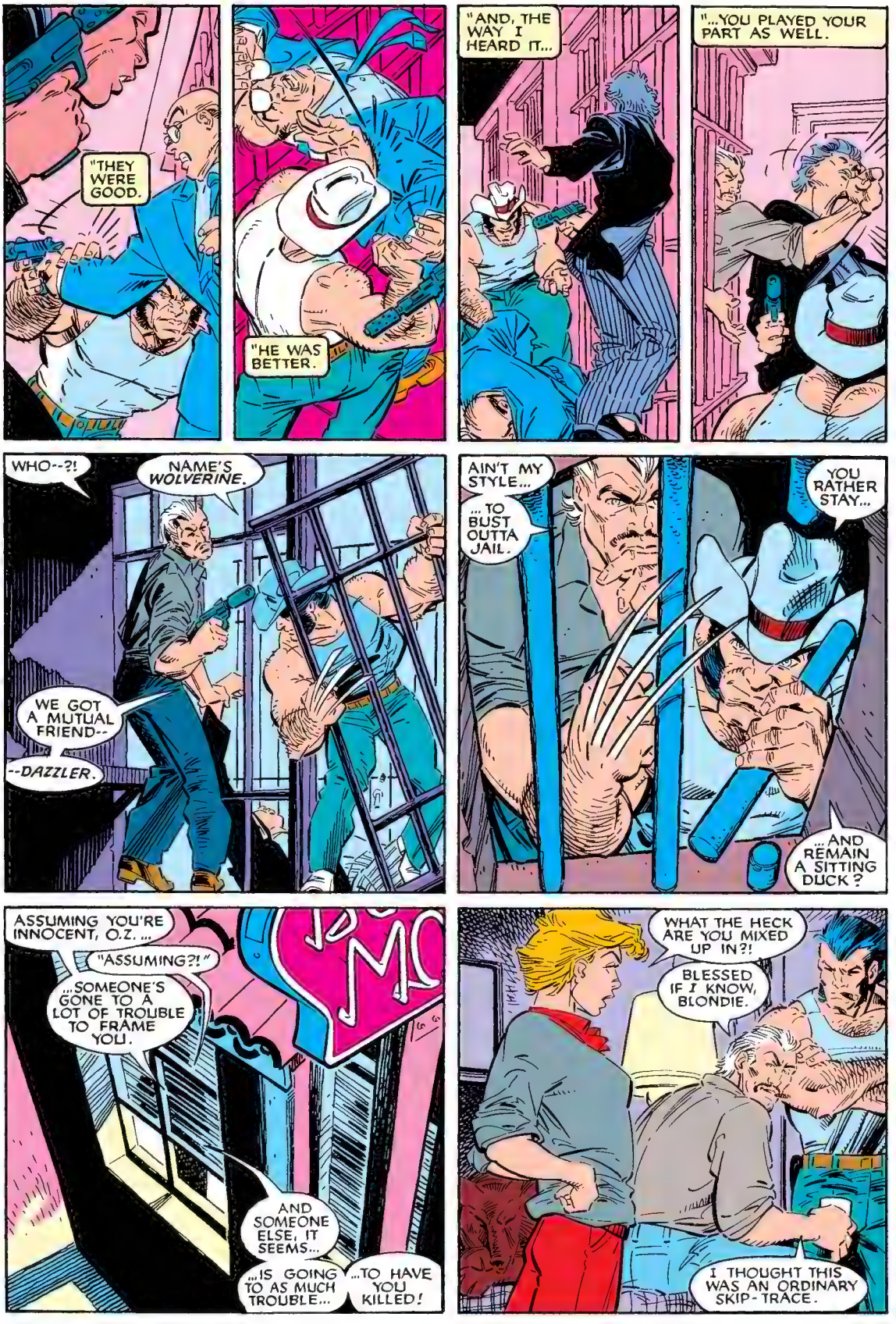

"THE FLIGHT TO MIAMI WAS NO PROBLEM.
"GETTING THE REST OF THE WAY TO CITRUS CENTER WAS THE ADVENTURE.
"FUNNY-- THE TOWN REMINDED ME OF ALL THE PLACES I TOURED WHEN I PURSUED MY SINGING CAREER.
"ONE-NIGHT HONKY-TONK STANDS FOR PAY THAT BARELY COVERED EXPENSES, BEFORE AUDIENCES MORE INTERESTED IN MY BODY THAN MY VOICE.
"STILL AND ALL, A LIFE I LOVED.
I WAS BEGINNIN' TO WONDER...
...IF YOU'D EVER SHOW.
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU--!
HEY, DARLIN'--
--SINCE WHEN DID I EVER...
...DO WHAT I WAS TOLD?
HEARD SOMETHIN' IN YOUR VOICE WHEN YOU MENTIONED CHASE--
--A FEAR THAT HE MAY NOT BE AS INNOCENT AS YOU WANT TO BELIEVE.
I HOPED YOU WOULDN'T NOTICE.
YUP.
I GUESS I SHOULD'VE KNOWN BETTER.
CHASE HAS A...
...SORT OF DOG.
CALLED CERBERUS, AFTER THE HOUND OF HADES.
MEANER THAN YOU.
HE COULD HAVE INFLICTED THOSE WOUNDS.
QUESTION IS, ON HIS OWN...
...OR AT CHASE'S COMMAND?

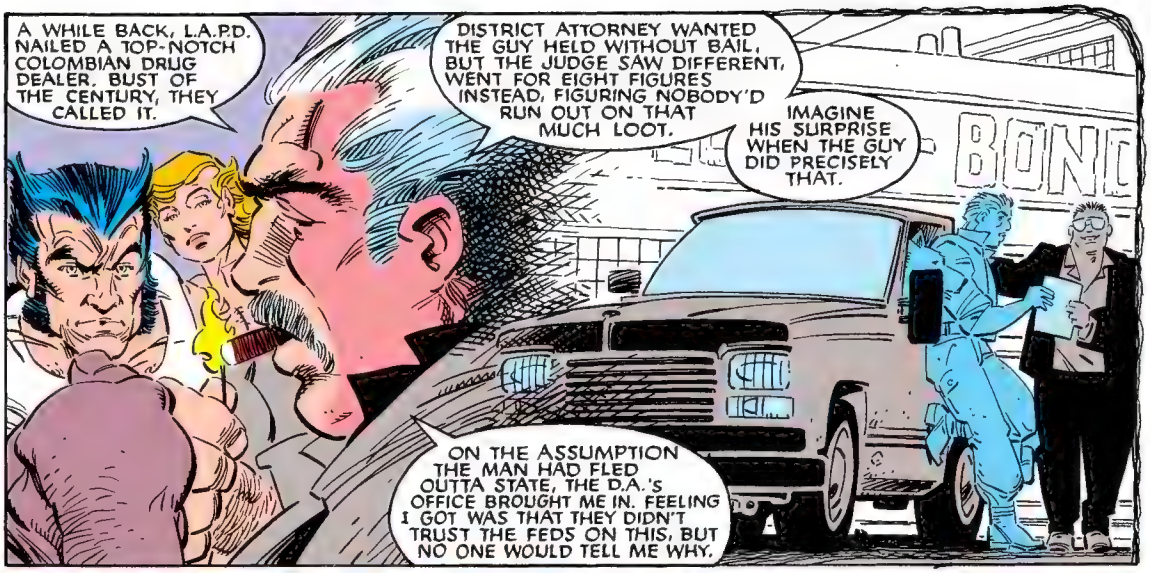
I'LL CHECK AT THE POLICE STATION, MAYBE THEY'LL LET ME SEE CHASE.
WORTH A TRY.
I GOT US ROOMS AT THE BATES MOTEL.
I'LL CART YOUR BAGS OVER.
THANKS, SEE YOU LATER, THEN.
"I WONDERED WHY, AFTER ALL WOLVIE'S TALK OF BACKING ME UP...
"... HE WAS SUDDENLY SO EAGER TO LEAVE ME?
"I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED, HE WAS A SECRET AGENT LONG BEFORE HE BECAME AN X-MAN.
"HE'D SPOTTED OUR 'TAIL' THE MOMENT THE MAN STARTED FOLLOWING US.
"I SUPPOSE, IN THOSE DAYS, IN THAT SENSE...
"... I REALLY *WAS* AN AMATEUR.
"BECAUSE I HADN'T NOTICED HIM.
GOT A NAME, BUB?
AND A REASON FOR PLAYIN' OUR SHADOW?!
"IT TAKES A BRAVE MAN--
"--OR A CONSUMMATE FOOL--
"-- TO CHALLENGE WOLVERINE.
"ESPECIALLY ONCE HE 'POPS' HIS CLAWS.
"I THINK OUR GOON...
"...WAS TOO STUPID TO KNOW ANY BETTER.
"HE PAID THE PRICE.


"WISH I'D BEEN HAVING BETTER LUCK.
PRISONER DON'T WANT ANY VISITORS, MA'AM.
COULD I SPEAK TO HIS ATTORNEY, THEN?
PUBLIC DEFENDER'S GONE FISHING.
YOU LEAVE YOUR NAME AN' NUMBER...
... WE'LL MAKE SURE HE GETS IN TOUCH.
YEAH. RIGHT. I'LL BET.
"I ONLY STUDIED UNDER-GRADUATE PRE-LAW, BUT I KNEW WHAT THESE COPS WERE PULLING WAS PATENTLY ILLEGAL.
"IF YOU'D EVER COME TO TRIAL, O.J., THE CASE WOULD HAVE BEEN THROWN OUT FIRST THING.
"BUT IN THE MEANTIME, I WAS STUCK.
"SO-- I SNUCK INTO...
"... THE POLICE IMPOUND LOT...
"...FOR A QUICK PEEK AT YOUR TRUCK.
"YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHO WAS WAITING.
CERBERUS!?!
HOW ARE YOU, PUPPY?!
YEAH, I MISSED YOU, TOO!
"HE AND WOLVIE HIT IT OFF TREMENDOUSLY--
"--ESPECIALLY AFTER WOLVIE FED HIM A COUPLE OF CHOICE HAVANA CIGARS. YOUR POOCH, O.J., HAS VERY WEIRD TASTES.


"WOLVIE AND I COMPARED NOTES. THE GOON-- STASHED AND TIED UP NEXT DOOR IN MY ROOM--
"--REMAINED FEROCIOUSLY UNCOOPERATIVE.
FELLA HAS A *RUSSIAN* BASE SCENT--
-- PACKING A *TOKAREV* 9-MIL, STANDARD KGB ISSUE.
OY-- HOW COME *THEY'RE* INVOLVED?!
GOOD QUESTION.
CHASE IS THE KEY.
BUT WE CAN'T GET NEAR HIM.
WANNA BET?
"HE EMPTIED A BOTTLE OF BOOZE OVER HIMSELF FOR EFFECT...
"... THEN SANG HIS WAY DOWN MAIN STREET.
"SINATRA, HE'S NOT.
"THE *GENDARMERIE*, BLESS 'EM, DID THEIR DUTY.
"AND-- *PRESTO*-- THERE HE WAS...
"...SHARING THE CELL BLOCK WITH YOU.


"BUT, BEFORE HE COULD INTRODUCE HIMSELF...
Mr. CHASE?
WHO WANTS TO KNOW?
FRIENDS...
...IN A POSITION TO HELP YOU IN THIS TIME OF NEED...
...PROVIDED YOU DO THE SAME FOR US IN RETURN.
WE ARE INTERESTED IN YOUR QUARRY.
LOOK, EVERYTHING I KNOW IS ON THE POLICE REPORT.
ONE OF OUR COLLEAGUES IS MISSING...
...CAN YOU PERHAPS ACCOUNT FOR THAT?
HEY, PAL, I'VE BEEN HERE THE PAST WEEK.
WELL-- WE HAD TO ASK.
HEY-- --WHAT GIVES?!
SNIKT!
YOU ARE A LOOSE END, Mr. CHASE.
AND WE ARE, BY NATURE...
...A TIDY PEOPLE--
WHUA?!!
--BUT I GOT A PRE-EMINENT CLAIM ON THE MAN.
AN' NO USE FOR HIM, DEAD.
SORRY, BOYS--


"THEY WERE GOOD.
"HE WAS BETTER.
"AND, THE WAY I HEARD IT...
"...YOU PLAYED YOUR PART AS WELL.
WHO--?!
NAME'S WOLVERINE.
WE GOT A MUTUAL FRIEND--
--DAZZLER.
AIN'T MY STYLE...
...TO BUST OUTTA JAIL.
YOU RATHER STAY...
...AND REMAIN A SITTING DUCK?
ASSUMING YOU'RE INNOCENT, O.Z. ...
"ASSUMING?!"
...SOMEONE'S GONE TO A LOT OF TROUBLE TO FRAME YOU.
AND SOMEONE ELSE, IT SEEMS...
...IS GOING TO AS MUCH TROUBLE...
...TO HAVE YOU KILLED!
WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU MIXED UP IN?!
BLESSED IF I KNOW, BLONDIE.
I THOUGHT THIS WAS AN ORDINARY SKIP-TRACE.

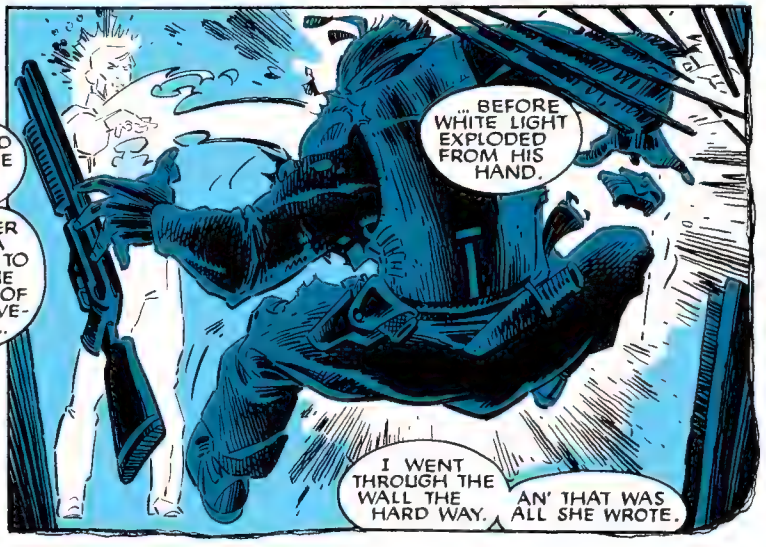

A WHILE BACK, L.A.P.D. NAILED A TOP-NOTCH COLOMBIAN DRUG DEALER. BUST OF THE CENTURY, THEY CALLED IT.
DISTRICT ATTORNEY WANTED THE GUY HELD WITHOUT BAIL, BUT THE JUDGE SAW DIFFERENT, WENT FOR EIGHT FIGURES INSTEAD, FIGURING NOBODY'D RUN OUT ON THAT MUCH LOOT.
IMAGINE HIS SURPRISE WHEN THE GUY DID PRECISELY THAT.
ON THE ASSUMPTION THE MAN HAD FLED OUTTA STATE, THE D.A.'S OFFICE BROUGHT ME IN. FEELING I GOT WAS THAT THEY DIDN'T TRUST THE FEDS ON THIS, BUT NO ONE WOULD TELL ME WHY.

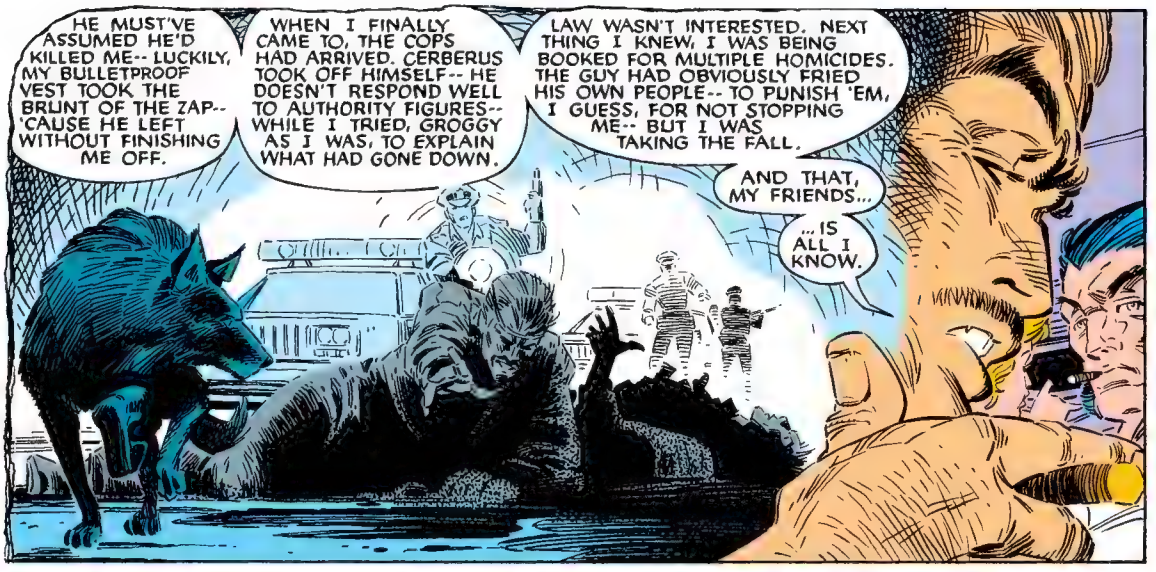
TOOK A WHILE, BUT THE TRAIL LED HERE, TO THE 'GLADES.
HE HAD A SMALL ARMY PROTECTIN' HIM.

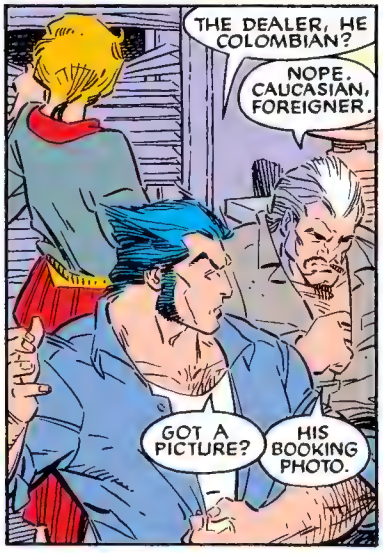
DOG AN' ME...
...WE CUT 'EM DOWN TO SIZE.

MAN DIDN'T LOOK BOTHERED TO SEE ME.
NEVER SEEN EYES AS COLD AS HIS.
LIKE A SHARK'S, Y'KNOW. NO MERCY, LESS HUMANITY.

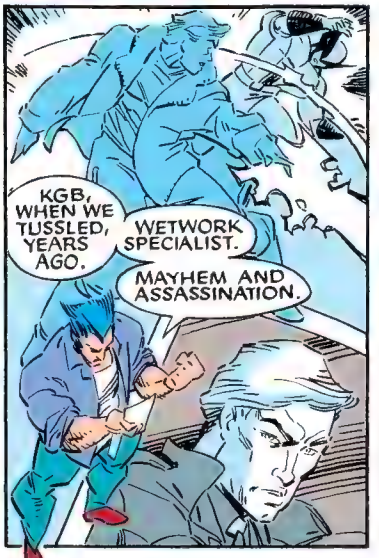
HE SMILED...
... AN' BEGAN TO GLOW--
--REMINDED ME A LITTLE OF YOU, DAZZ--
-- NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO PULL THE TRIGGER OF MY TWELVE-GAUGE...


... BEFORE WHITE LIGHT EXPLODED FROM HIS HAND.
I WENT THROUGH THE WALL THE HARD WAY.
AN' THAT WAS ALL SHE WROTE.


HE MUST'VE ASSUMED HE'D KILLED ME-- LUCKILY, MY BULLETPROOF VEST TOOK THE BRUNT OF THE ZAP-- 'CAUSE HE LEFT WITHOUT FINISHING ME OFF.
WHEN I FINALLY CAME TO, THE COPS HAD ARRIVED. CERBERUS TOOK OFF HIMSELF-- HE DOESN'T RESPOND WELL TO AUTHORITY FIGURES-- WHILE I TRIED, GROGGY AS I WAS, TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAD GONE DOWN.
LAW WASN'T INTERESTED. NEXT THING I KNEW, I WAS BEING BOOKED FOR MULTIPLE HOMICIDES. THE GUY HAD OBVIOUSLY FRIED HIS OWN PEOPLE-- TO PUNISH 'EM, I GUESS, FOR NOT STOPPING ME-- BUT I WAS TAKING THE FALL.
AND THAT, MY FRIENDS...
...IS ALL I KNOW.


THE DEALER, HE COLOMBIAN?
NOPE. CAUCASIAN, FOREIGNER.
GOT A PICTURE?
HIS BOOKING PHOTO.

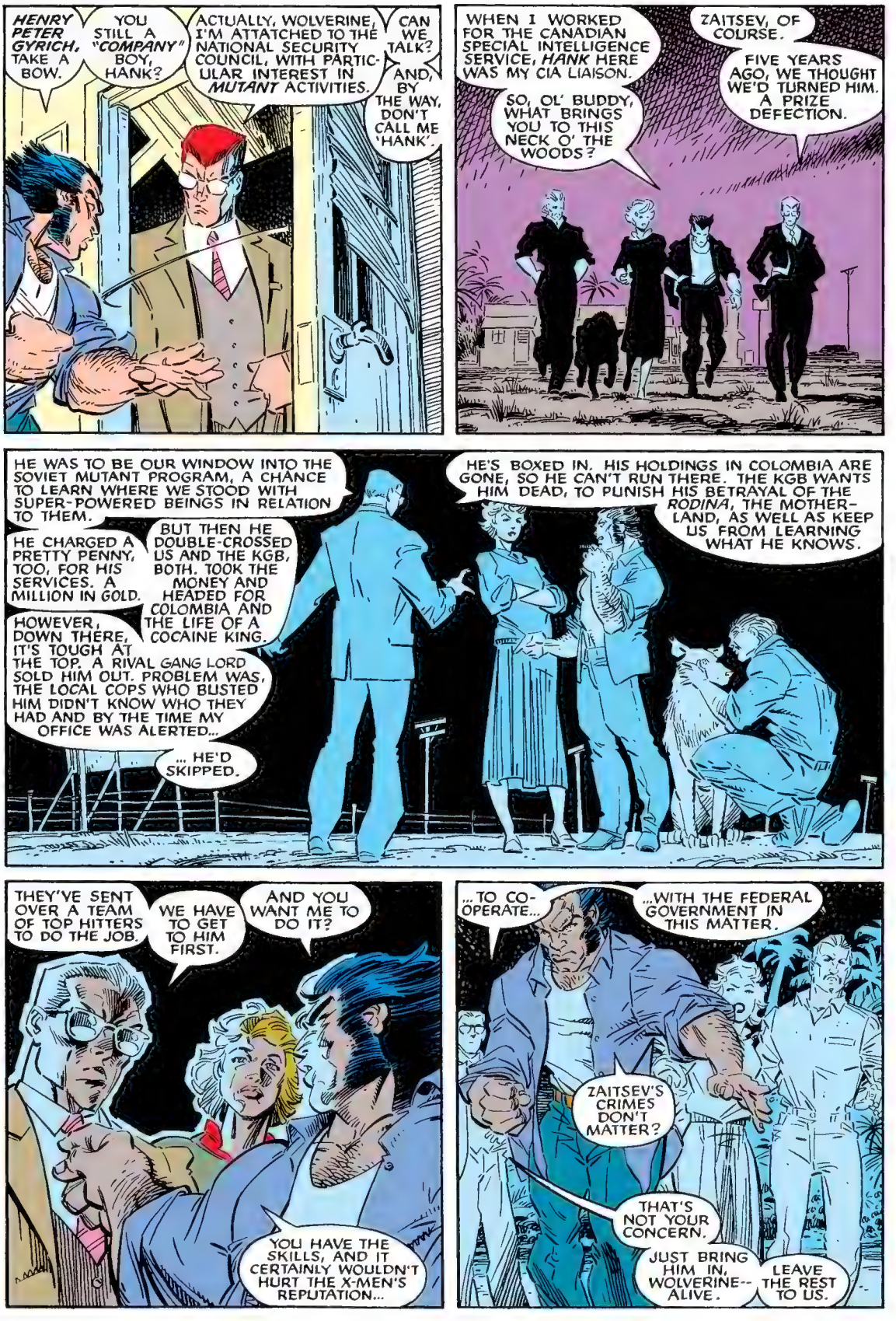
YEAH-- THAT'S HIM.
RECOGNIZED HIM FROM THE POWER BLAST YOU DESCRIBED. THIS CLINCHES IT.
VLADIMIR SEMYANOVITCH ZAITSEV.
A RUSSIAN?

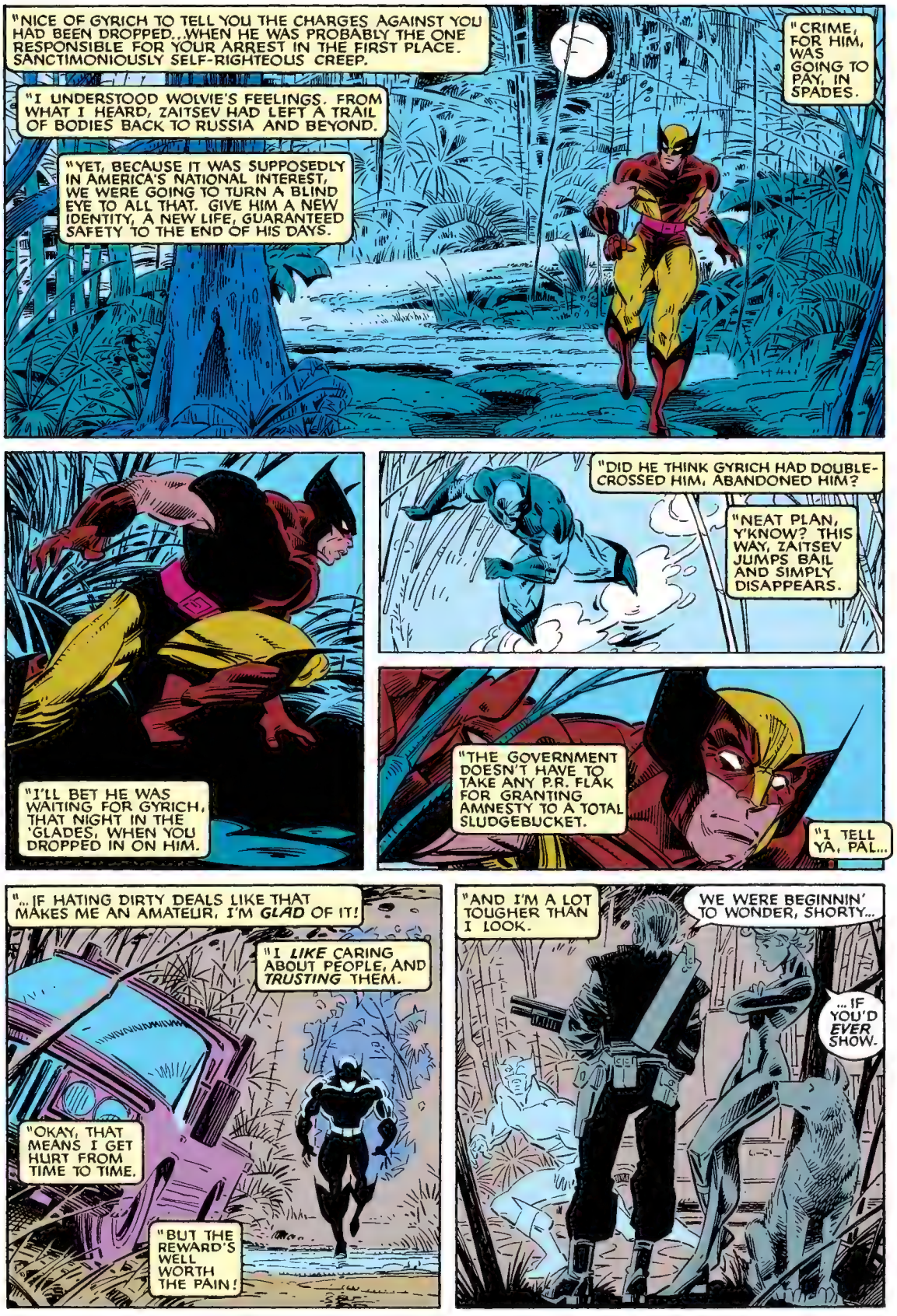

KGB, WHEN WE TUSSLED, YEARS AGO.
WETWORK SPECIALIST.
MAYHEM AND ASSASSINATION.

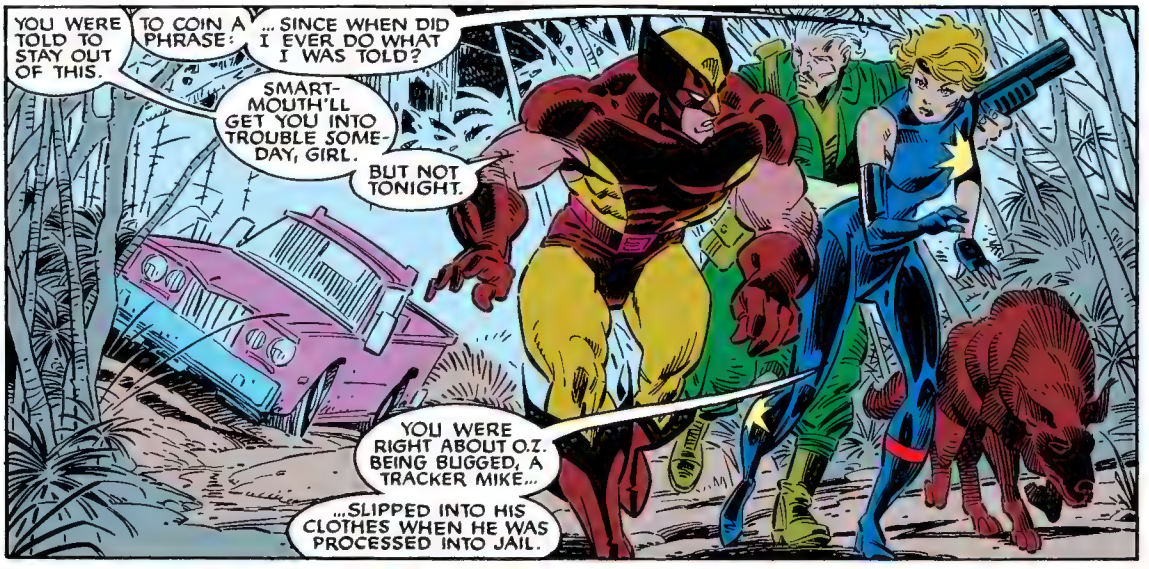
BUT-- IF ZAITSEV'S A SOVIET SPY...
...WHY ARE OTHER SOVIET SPIES CHASING HIM?
RESCUE TEAM?
INTERNATIONAL ESPIONAGE--
--THIS IS A LITTLE OUTTA MY LEAGUE.

OR MAYBE VLAD'S BECOME AN EMBARRASS-MENT?
NOK NOK

RUSSIANS?!
THEY GENERALLY DON'T KNOCK.
SCENT TELLS ME, THOUGH...
...IT'S SOMEONE ALMOST AS BAD.

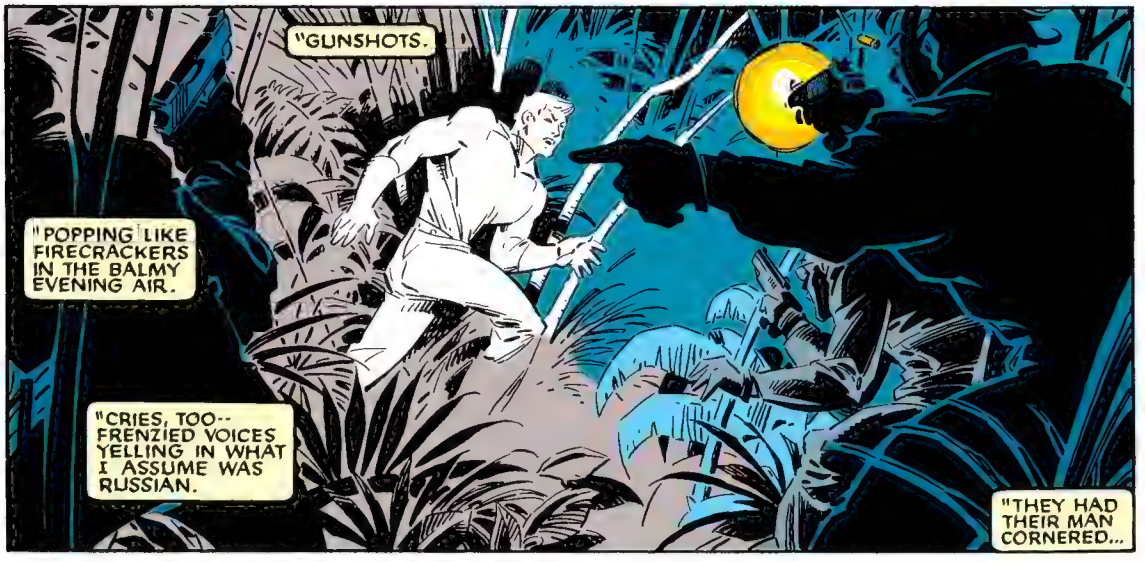

HENRY PETER GYRICH, TAKE A BOW.
YOU STILL A "COMPANY" BOY, HANK?
ACTUALLY, WOLVERINE, I'M ATTATCHED TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, WITH PARTICULAR INTEREST IN MUTANT ACTIVITIES.
CAN WE TALK?
AND, BY THE WAY, DON'T CALL ME 'HANK'.
WHEN I WORKED FOR THE CANADIAN SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, HANK HERE WAS MY CIA LIAISON.
SO, OL' BUDDY, WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THIS NECK O' THE WOODS?
ZAITSEV, OF COURSE.
FIVE YEARS AGO, WE THOUGHT WE'D TURNED HIM. A PRIZE DEFECTION.
HE WAS TO BE OUR WINDOW INTO THE SOVIET MUTANT PROGRAM, A CHANCE TO LEARN WHERE WE STOOD WITH SUPER-POWERED BEINGS IN RELATION TO THEM.
HE CHARGED A PRETTY PENNY, TOO, FOR HIS SERVICES. A MILLION IN GOLD.
BUT THEN HE DOUBLE-CROSSED US AND THE KGB, BOTH. TOOK THE MONEY AND HEADED FOR COLOMBIA AND THE LIFE OF A COCAINE KING.
HOWEVER, DOWN THERE, IT'S TOUGH AT THE TOP. A RIVAL GANG LORD SOLD HIM OUT. PROBLEM WAS, THE LOCAL COPS WHO BUSTED HIM DIDN'T KNOW WHO THEY HAD AND BY THE TIME MY OFFICE WAS ALERTED...
... HE'D SKIPPED.
HE'S BOXED IN. HIS HOLDINGS IN COLOMBIA ARE GONE, SO HE CAN'T RUN THERE. THE KGB WANTS HIM DEAD, TO PUNISH HIS BETRAYAL OF THE RODINA, THE MOTHERLAND, AS WELL AS KEEP US FROM LEARNING WHAT HE KNOWS.
THEY'VE SENT OVER A TEAM OF TOP HITTERS TO DO THE JOB.
WE HAVE TO GET TO HIM FIRST.
AND YOU WANT ME TO DO IT?
YOU HAVE THE SKILLS, AND IT CERTAINLY WOULDN'T HURT THE X-MEN'S REPUTATION...
...TO CO-OPERATE...
...WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN THIS MATTER.
ZAITSEV'S CRIMES DON'T MATTER?
THAT'S NOT YOUR CONCERN.
JUST BRING HIM IN, WOLVERINE--ALIVE.
LEAVE THE REST TO US.


"NICE OF GYRICH TO TELL YOU THE CHARGES AGAINST YOU HAD BEEN DROPPED...WHEN HE WAS PROBABLY THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR ARREST IN THE FIRST PLACE. SANCTIMONIOUSLY SELF-RIGHTEOUS CREEP.
"I UNDERSTOOD WOLVIE'S FEELINGS. FROM WHAT I HEARD, ZAITSEV HAD LEFT A TRAIL OF BODIES BACK TO RUSSIA AND BEYOND.
"YET, BECAUSE IT WAS SUPPOSEDLY IN AMERICA'S NATIONAL INTEREST, WE WERE GOING TO TURN A BLIND EYE TO ALL THAT. GIVE HIM A NEW IDENTITY, A NEW LIFE, GUARANTEED SAFETY TO THE END OF HIS DAYS.
"CRIME, FOR HIM, WAS GOING TO PAY, IN SPADES.
"I'LL BET HE WAS WAITING FOR GYRICH, THAT NIGHT IN THE 'GLADES, WHEN YOU DROPPED IN ON HIM.
"DID HE THINK GYRICH HAD DOUBLE-CROSSED HIM, ABANDONED HIM?
"NEAT PLAN, Y'KNOW? THIS WAY, ZAITSEV JUMPS BAIL AND SIMPLY DISAPPEARS.
"THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T HAVE TO TAKE ANY P.R. FLAK FOR GRANTING AMNESTY TO A TOTAL SLUDGEBUCKET.
"I TELL YA, PAL...
"...IF HATING DIRTY DEALS LIKE THAT MAKES ME AN AMATEUR, I'M GLAD OF IT!
"I LIKE CARING ABOUT PEOPLE, AND TRUSTING THEM.
"OKAY, THAT MEANS I GET HURT FROM TIME TO TIME.
"BUT THE REWARD'S WELL WORTH THE PAIN!
"AND I'M A LOT TOUGHER THAN I LOOK.
WE WERE BEGINNIN' TO WONDER, SHORTY...
...IF YOU'D EVER SHOW.


YOU WERE TOLD TO STAY OUT OF THIS.
TO COIN A PHRASE:
... SINCE WHEN DID I EVER DO WHAT I WAS TOLD?
SMART-MOUTH'LL GET YOU INTO TROUBLE SOME-DAY, GIRL.
BUT NOT TONIGHT.
YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT O.Z. BEING BUGGED, A TRACKER MIKE...
...SLIPPED INTO HIS CLOTHES WHEN HE WAS PROCESSED INTO JAIL.

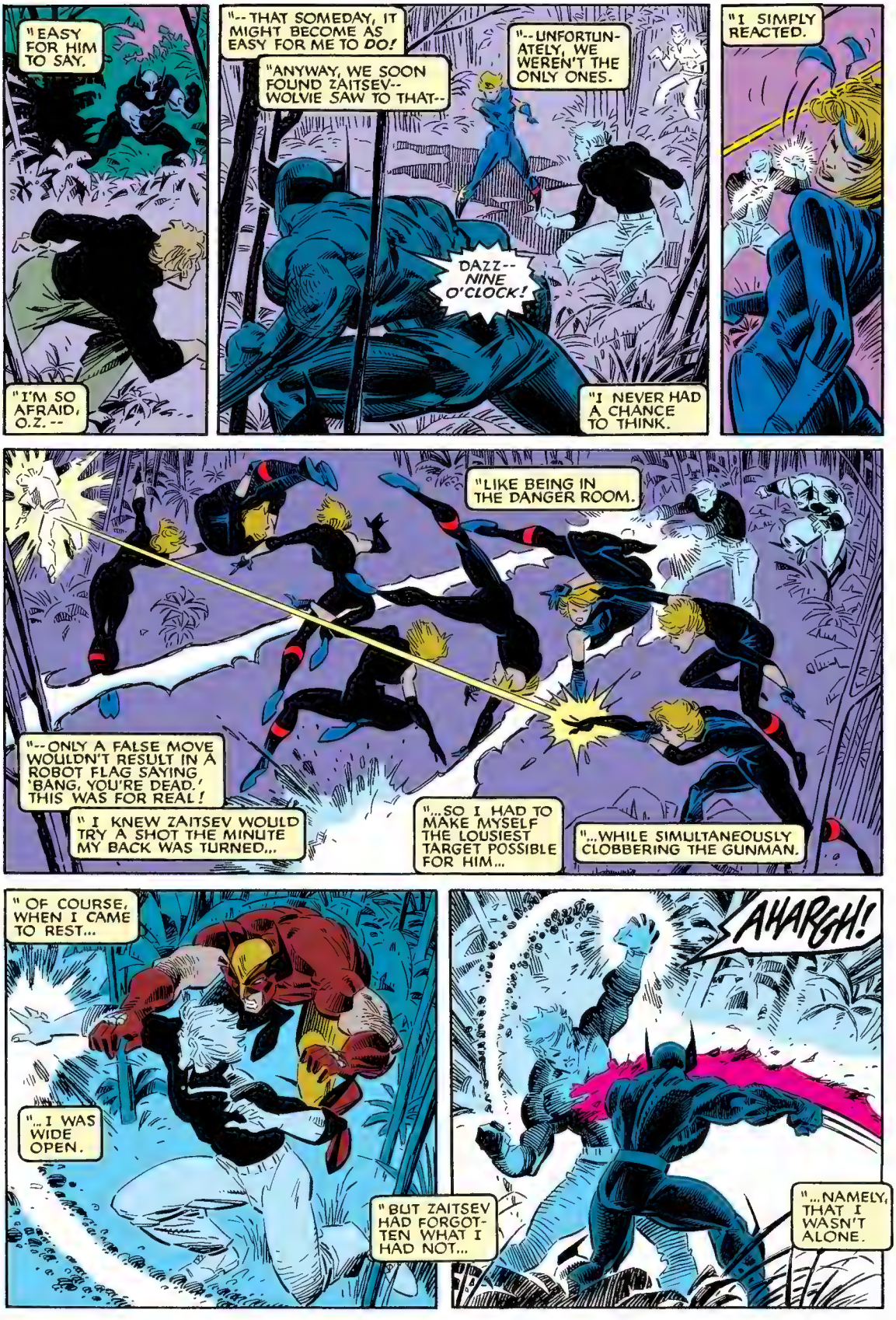
THANKS FOR SLIPPING US THE NOTE.
THOUGHT THAT WAS IT.
EXPLAINS HOW HANK FOUND OUR MOTEL.
YOU REALLY DON'T LIKE HIM.

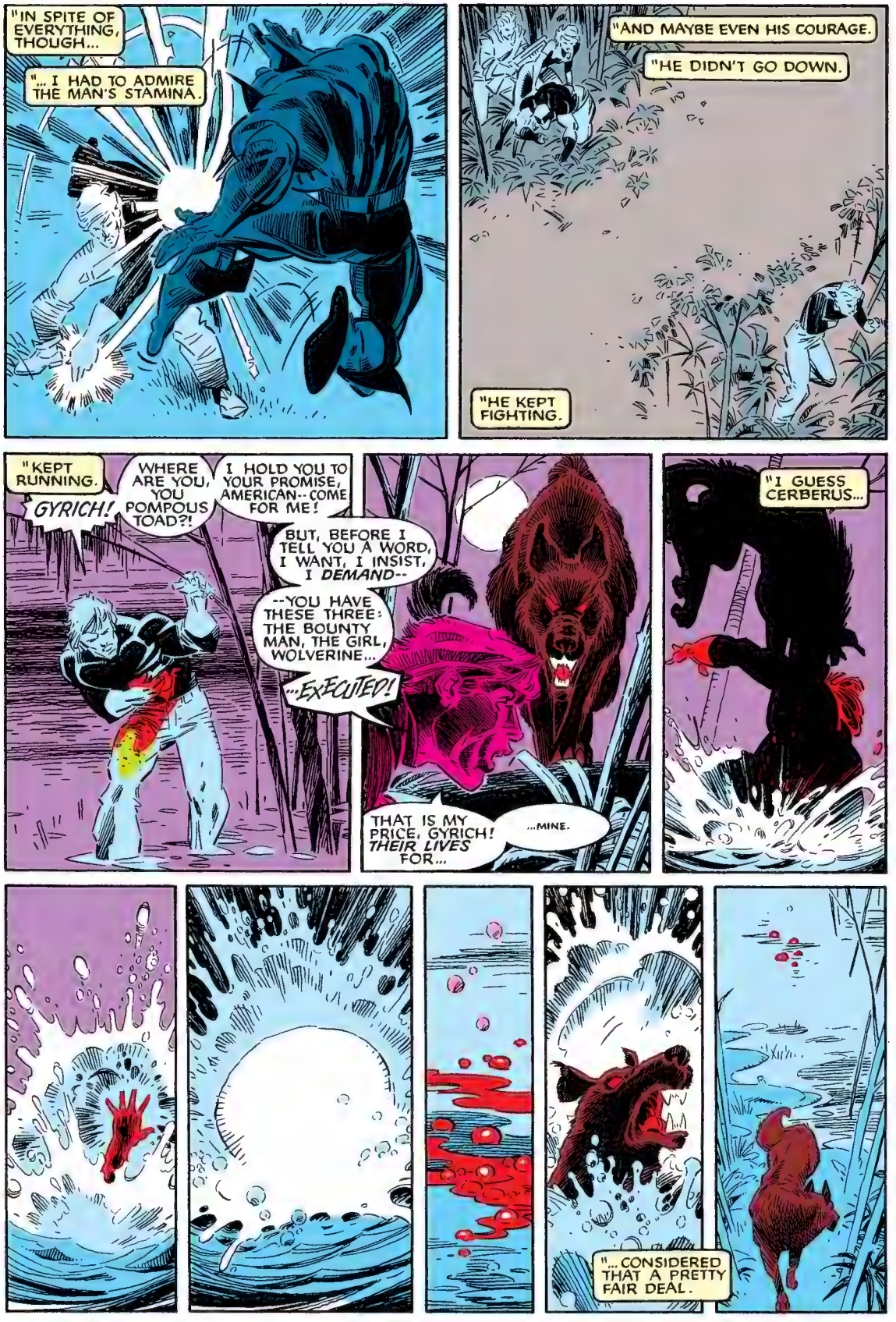
AIN'T MUCH TO LIKE.
HOW'D YOU FIND ME?
CERBERUS.
FLAMIN' BOW-WOW.
MIND YOUR TONGUE, HE'S THE SWEETEST LITTLE PUPPY-- LISTEN!

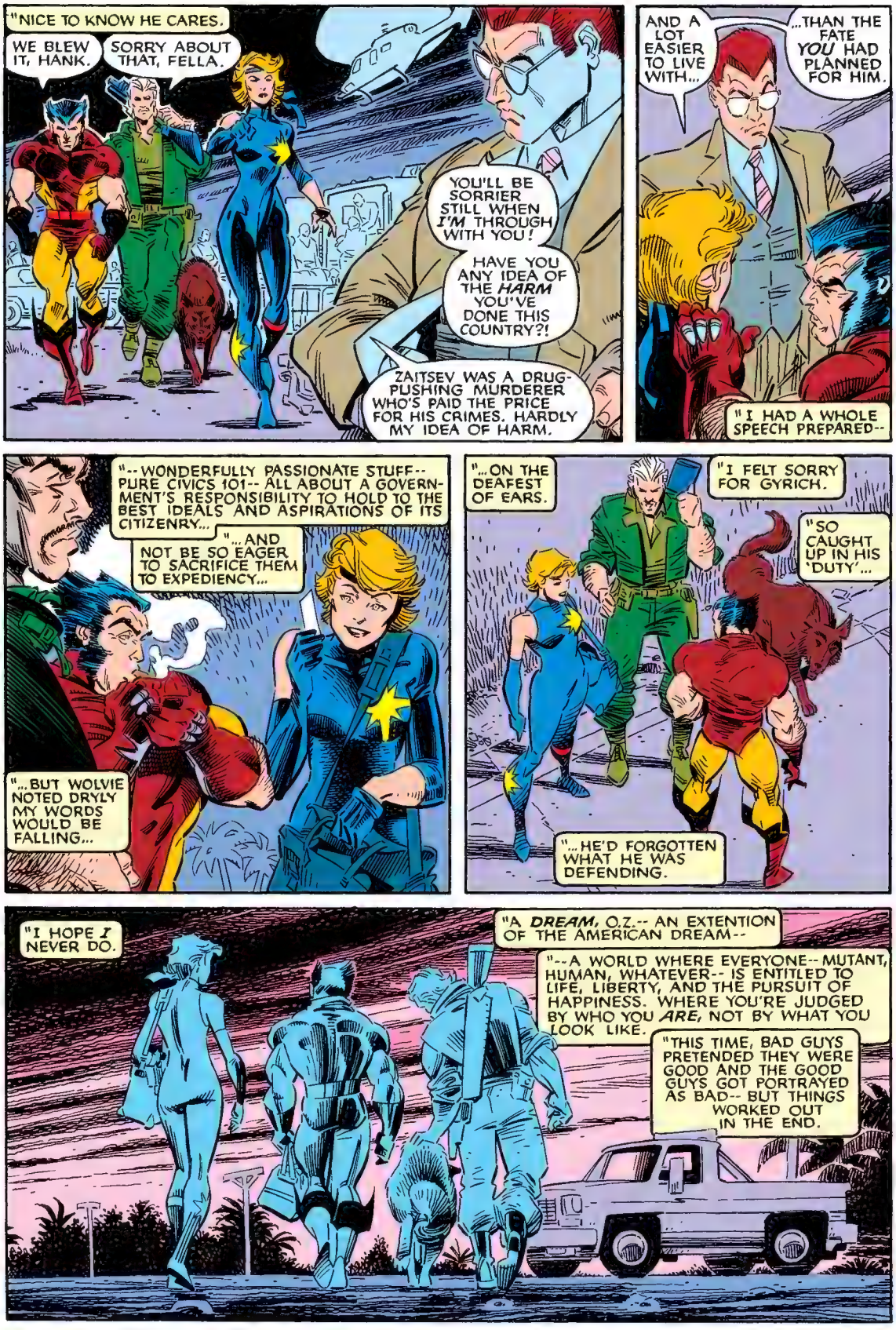

"GUNSHOTS.
"POPPING LIKE FIRECRACKERS IN THE BALMY EVENING AIR.
"CRIES, TOO-- FRENZIED VOICES YELLING IN WHAT I ASSUME WAS RUSSIAN.
"THEY HAD THEIR MAN CORNERED...

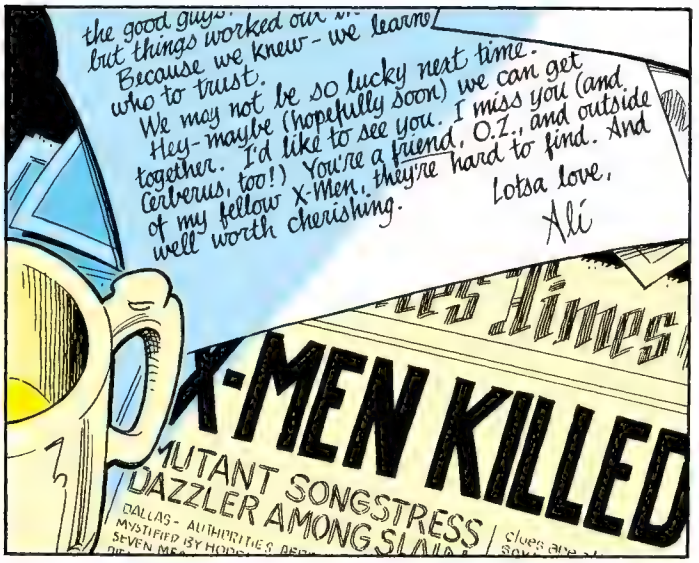
"...FORGETTING, IN THE PROCESS...
SHBAM!
"... THAT'S WHEN HE BECOMES...
ZRAK!
"... MOST DANGEROUS.
AIYIEE!
"ARE YOU USED TO VIOLENCE, O.Z., TO DEATH? I GUESS YOU MUST BE, GIVEN THE WORK YOU DO AND THE PEOPLE YOU ASSOCIATE WITH.
"IT ALWAYS SHAKES ME TO THE CORE.
"TO SEE A LIVING, BREATHING, FEELING ORGANISM--A *HUMAN BEING*--
"--SUDDENLY REDUCED TO CLAY.
"DREAMS, HOPES, LOVES--
"--MADE INSTANT DUST, AS IF THEY'D NEVER BEEN.
SO, TOVARISCH--
--WE MEET AGAIN.
BUT, I SUSPECT...
...FOR THE *LAST* TIME!
THAT, BUB--
...IS A *FACT!*
"FAST AS WOLVIE WAS-- DUCKING UNDER ONE ENERGY BOLT--
"--ZAITSEV, IMPOSSIBLY, WAS FASTER, BECAUSE WOLVIE MISSED HIM.

"ZAITSEV DIDN'T HAVE SUFFICIENT 'JUICE' FOR ANOTHER FULL-POWER BLAST--
"--oh, BROTHER, DID I KNOW *THAT* FEELING--
"--BUT HE WAS ABLE TO CLIP WOLVIE'S ARM--
"--HARD ENOUGH TO PARALYZE IT.
YO, BRIGHT-EYES--REMEMBER ME?!
THE BOUNTY MAN!
I'D BE SAFE NOW, IF NOT FOR YOUR INTERFERENCE.
I SHOULD HAVE MADE CERTAIN OF YOU WHEN LAST WE MET.
I SHALL NOT BE SO CARELESS A SECOND TIME.
SORRY, BUSTER...
... BUT I LIKE THE MAN...
...THE WAY HE IS!
"MY *DAZZLE-STROBE* DISORIENTED HIM...
"... AND HE RAN LIKE A RABBIT.
"AS USUAL, WOLVIE FIGURED I'D SCREWED UP.
SHOULD'A USED YOUR PHOTON BLAST TO DECK HIM, DAZZ...
...OR, BETTER YET, YOUR *LASER* TO FINISH THE JOB.


"EASY FOR HIM TO SAY.
"I'M SO AFRAID, O.Z. --
"-- THAT SOMEDAY, IT MIGHT BECOME AS EASY FOR ME TO DO!
"ANYWAY, WE SOON FOUND ZAITSEV-- WOLVIE SAW TO THAT--
"-- UNFORTUNATELY, WE WEREN'T THE ONLY ONES.
DAZZ-- NINE O'CLOCK!
"I NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO THINK.
"I SIMPLY REACTED.
"LIKE BEING IN THE DANGER ROOM.
"-- ONLY A FALSE MOVE WOULDN'T RESULT IN A ROBOT FLAG SAYING 'BANG, YOU'RE DEAD.' THIS WAS FOR REAL!
" I KNEW ZAITSEV WOULD TRY A SHOT THE MINUTE MY BACK WAS TURNED...
"...SO I HAD TO MAKE MYSELF THE LOUSIEST TARGET POSSIBLE FOR HIM...
"...WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY CLOBBERING THE GUNMAN.
" OF COURSE, WHEN I CAME TO REST...
"... I WAS WIDE OPEN.
" BUT ZAITSEV HAD FORGOTTEN WHAT I HAD NOT...
AHARGH!
"...NAMELY, THAT I WASN'T ALONE.


"IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING, THOUGH...
"... I HAD TO ADMIRE THE MAN'S STAMINA.
"AND MAYBE EVEN HIS COURAGE.
"HE DIDN'T GO DOWN.
"HE KEPT FIGHTING.
"KEPT RUNNING.
GYRICH!
WHERE ARE YOU, YOU POMPOUS TOAD?!
I HOLD YOU TO YOUR PROMISE, AMERICAN--COME FOR ME!
BUT, BEFORE I TELL YOU A WORD, I WANT, I INSIST, I DEMAND--
--YOU HAVE THESE THREE: THE BOUNTY MAN, THE GIRL, WOLVERINE...
...EXECUTED!
THAT IS MY PRICE, GYRICH! THEIR LIVES FOR...
...MINE.
"I GUESS CERBERUS...
"... CONSIDERED THAT A PRETTY FAIR DEAL.


"NICE TO KNOW HE CARES.
WE BLEW IT, HANK.
SORRY ABOUT THAT, FELLA.
YOU'LL BE SORRIER STILL WHEN I'M THROUGH WITH YOU!
HAVE YOU ANY IDEA OF THE HARM YOU'VE DONE THIS COUNTRY?!
ZAITSEV WAS A DRUG-PUSHING MURDERER WHO'S PAID THE PRICE FOR HIS CRIMES. HARDLY MY IDEA OF HARM.
AND A LOT EASIER TO LIVE WITH...
...THAN THE FATE YOU HAD PLANNED FOR HIM.
"I HAD A WHOLE SPEECH PREPARED--
"--WONDERFULLY PASSIONATE STUFF-- PURE CIVICS 101-- ALL ABOUT A GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO HOLD TO THE BEST IDEALS AND ASPIRATIONS OF ITS CITIZENRY...
"...AND NOT BE SO EAGER TO SACRIFICE THEM TO EXPEDIENCY...
"...BUT WOLVIE NOTED DRYLY MY WORDS WOULD BE FALLING...
"...ON THE DEAFEST OF EARS.
"I FELT SORRY FOR GYRICH.
"SO CAUGHT UP IN HIS 'DUTY'...
"...HE'D FORGOTTEN WHAT HE WAS DEFENDING.
"I HOPE I NEVER DO.
"A DREAM, O.Z.-- AN EXTENTION OF THE AMERICAN DREAM--
"--A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE-- MUTANT, HUMAN, WHATEVER-- IS ENTITLED TO LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. WHERE YOU'RE JUDGED BY WHO YOU ARE, NOT BY WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE.
"THIS TIME, BAD GUYS PRETENDED THEY WERE GOOD AND THE GOOD GUYS GOT PORTRAYED AS BAD-- BUT THINGS WORKED OUT IN THE END.

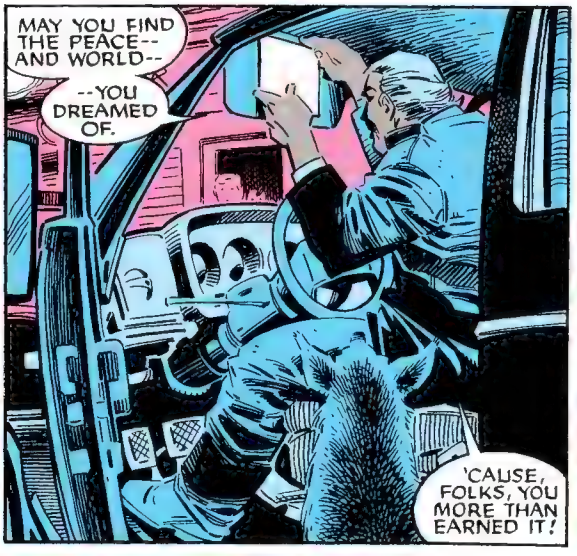

the good guys.
but things worked our
Because we knew - we learned
who to trust.
We may not be so lucky next time.
Hey-maybe (hopefully soon) we can get
together. I'd like to see you. I miss you (and
Cerberus, too!) You're a friend, O.Z., and outside
of my fellow X-Men, they're hard to find. And
well worth cherishing.
Lotsa love,
Ali
X-MEN KILLED
MUTANT SONGSTRESS
DAZZLER AMONG SLAIN

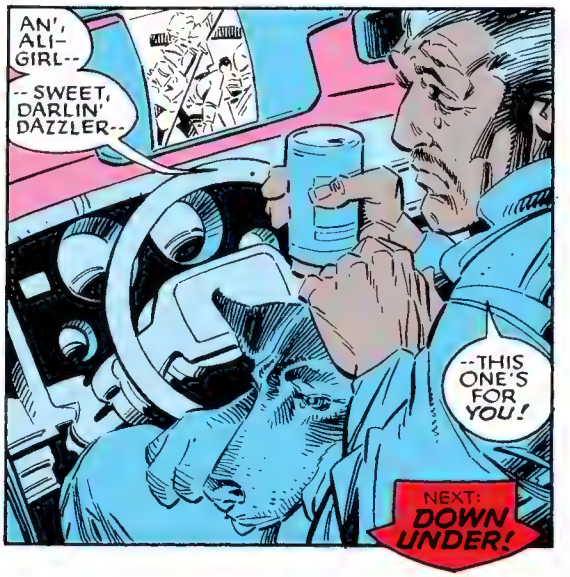
Y'ASK ME, IT'S GOOD RIDDANCE.
THOSE MUTIES GOT WHAT THEY DESERVED.
WORLD'S BETTER OFF WITHOUT THEIR KIND.

SOME OF THOSE "MUTIES", PAL, WERE FRIENDS OF MINE.
IT'S DISRESPECTFUL TO SPEAK SO OF THE DEAD.
HOW'S ABOUT, INSTEAD, YOU ALL RAISE YOUR GLASSES IN A TOAST?

AN' IF YOU DON'T--
--WELL, I'M A TOLERANT MAN BY NATURE.
GR.RRRR
BUT MY DOG, HE'S GOT A REAL SHORT FUSE.

TO DAZZLER, AND THE X-MEN!
TO DAZZLER, AND THE X-MEN!


MAY YOU FIND THE PEACE-- AND WORLD--
--YOU DREAMED OF.
'CAUSE, FOLKS, YOU MORE THAN EARNED IT!


AN', ALI-GIRL--
-- SWEET, DARLIN' DAZZLER--
--THIS ONE'S FOR YOU!
NEXT: DOWN UNDER!

MARVEL
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
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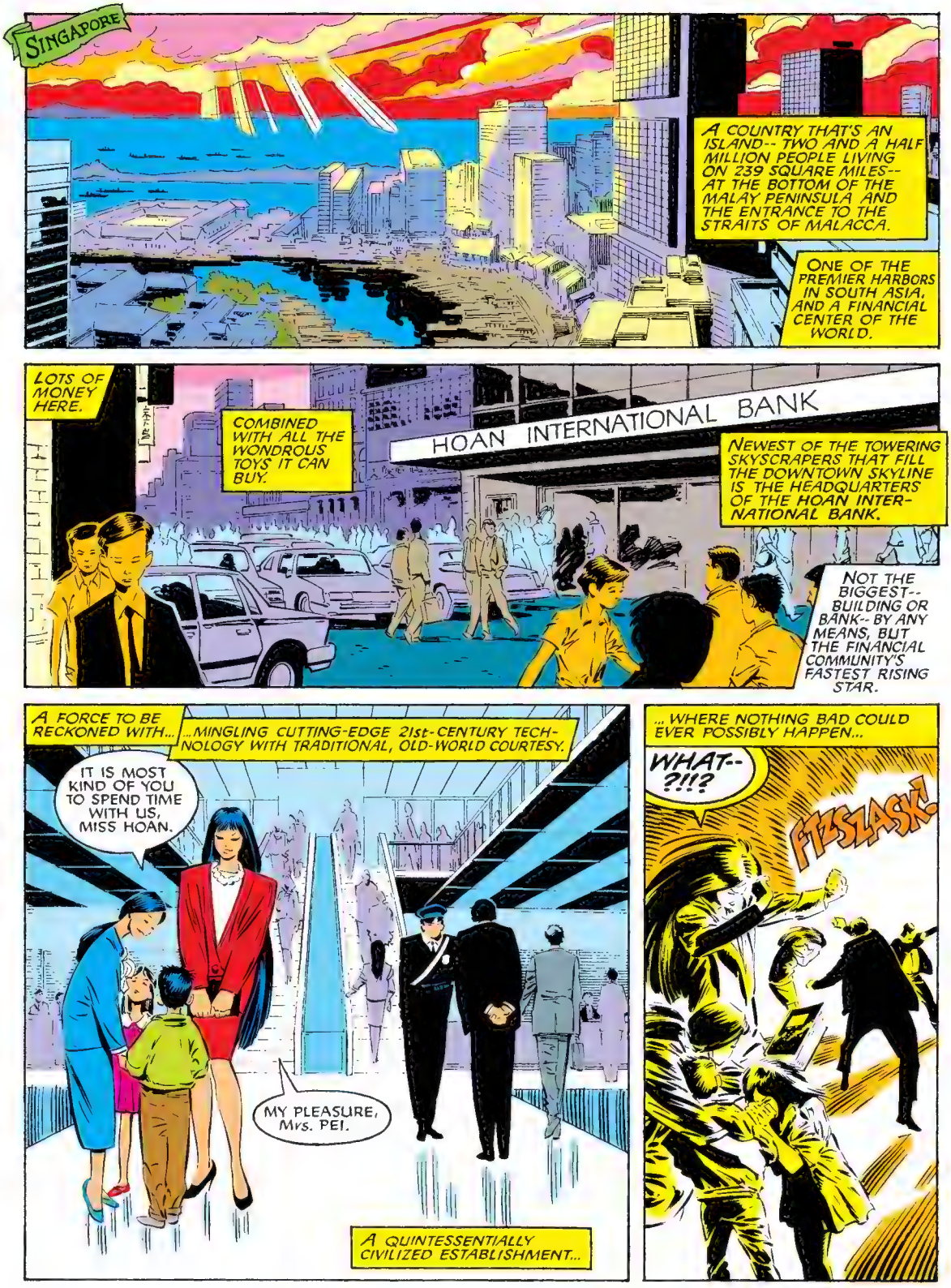

SINGAPORE
A COUNTRY THAT'S AN ISLAND-- TWO AND A HALF MILLION PEOPLE LIVING ON 239 SQUARE MILES-- AT THE BOTTOM OF THE MALAY PENINSULA AND THE ENTRANCE TO THE STRAITS OF MALACCA.
ONE OF THE PREMIER HARBORS IN SOUTH ASIA, AND A FINANCIAL CENTER OF THE WORLD.
LOTS OF MONEY HERE.
COMBINED WITH ALL THE WONDROUS TOYS IT CAN BUY.
HOAN INTERNATIONAL BANK
NEWEST OF THE TOWERING SKYSCRAPERS THAT FILL THE DOWNTOWN SKYLINE IS THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE HOAN INTERNATIONAL BANK.
NOT THE BIGGEST-- BUILDING OR BANK-- BY ANY MEANS, BUT THE FINANCIAL COMMUNITY'S FASTEST RISING STAR.
A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH...
...MINGLING CUTTING-EDGE 21st-CENTURY TECHNOLOGY WITH TRADITIONAL, OLD-WORLD COURTESY.
IT IS MOST KIND OF YOU TO SPEND TIME WITH US, MISS HOAN.
MY PLEASURE, Mrs. PEI.
A QUINTESSENTIALLY CIVILIZED ESTABLISHMENT...
...WHERE NOTHING BAD COULD EVER POSSIBLY HAPPEN...
WHAT--?!!?
FIZSLASK!

STAN LEE PRESENTS

DOUBLE DOWN

STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN

RAIDERS-- --AS MUCH MACHINES AS MEN!

Mrs. PEI-- CHILDREN-- GET DOWN!

BAM!

BRATTA RATTA RATTA RATTA

BAM BLAM

KOOM!

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA

BOOM! BLAM!

CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER
MARC SILVESTRI, PENCILER
DAN GREEN, INKER
GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER
ANN NOCENTI, EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO, EDITOR IN CHIEF

IN SECONDS, THE BANK'S LOBBY...

...IS TRANSFORMED INTO A SLAUGHTERHOUSE.

BULLETS FLY WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION, OR MERCY.

MEI LING--

--BLESSED BUDDHA, MY BABY--

--MEI LING!

FIGURE WE GOT THEIR ATTENTION, PRETTY BOY?

THOSE STILL BREATHING, FEARLESS LEADER, INDUBITABLY.

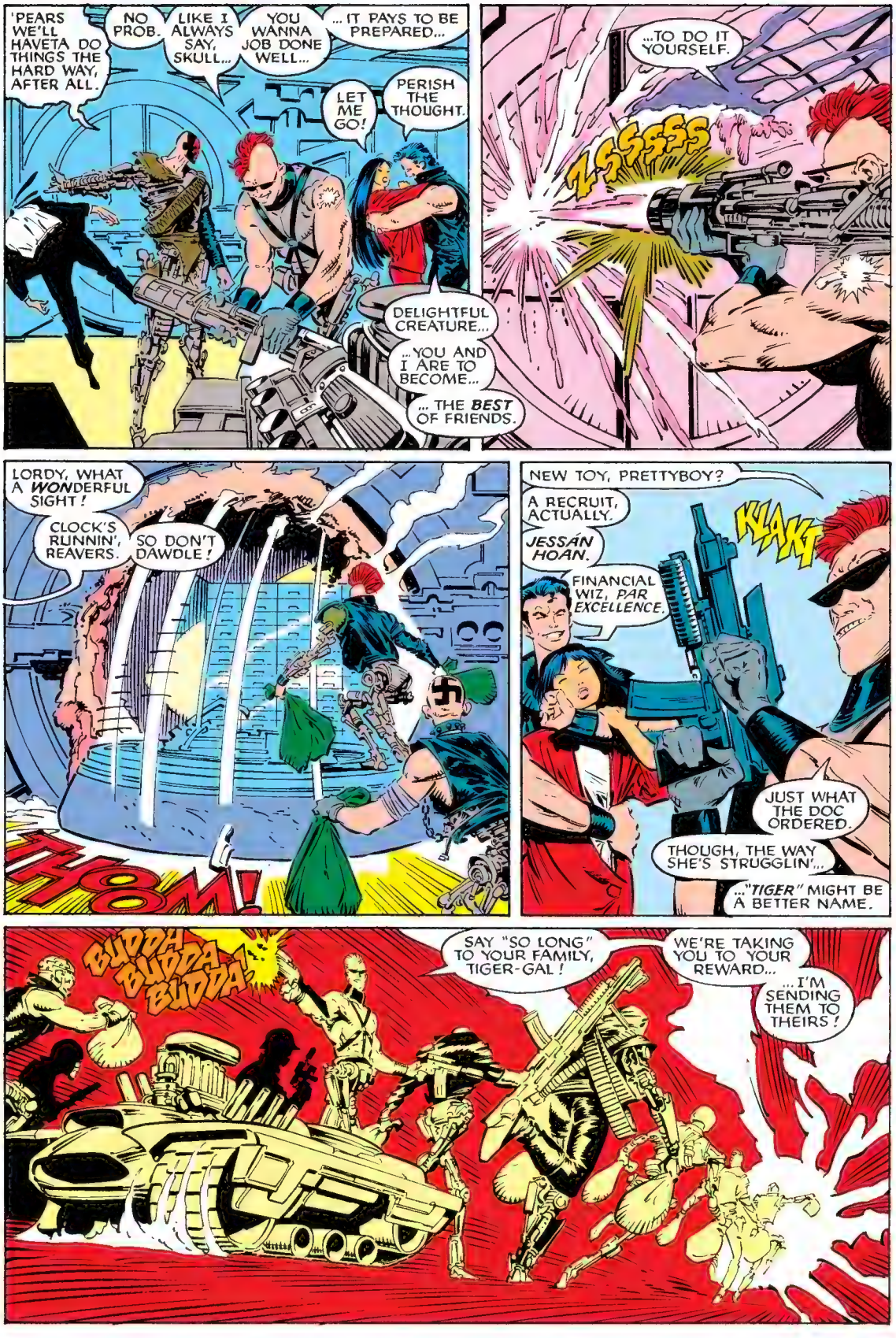
LORDY, I DO LOVE IT WHEN MY PLAN COMES TOGETHER.

Y'ALL KNOW YOUR JOBS, REAVERS--

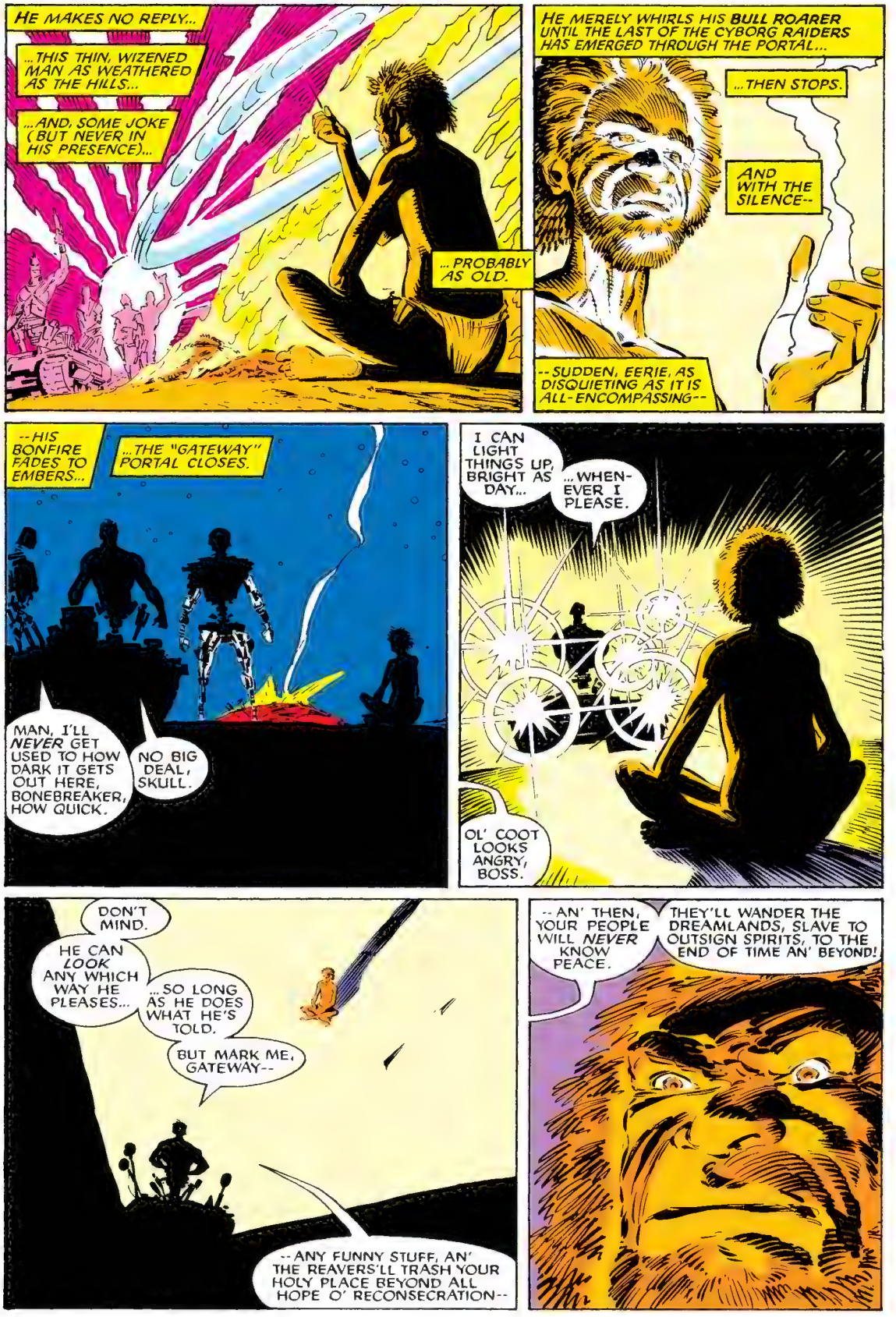
SNAP

--LET'S LOOT THE JOINT!

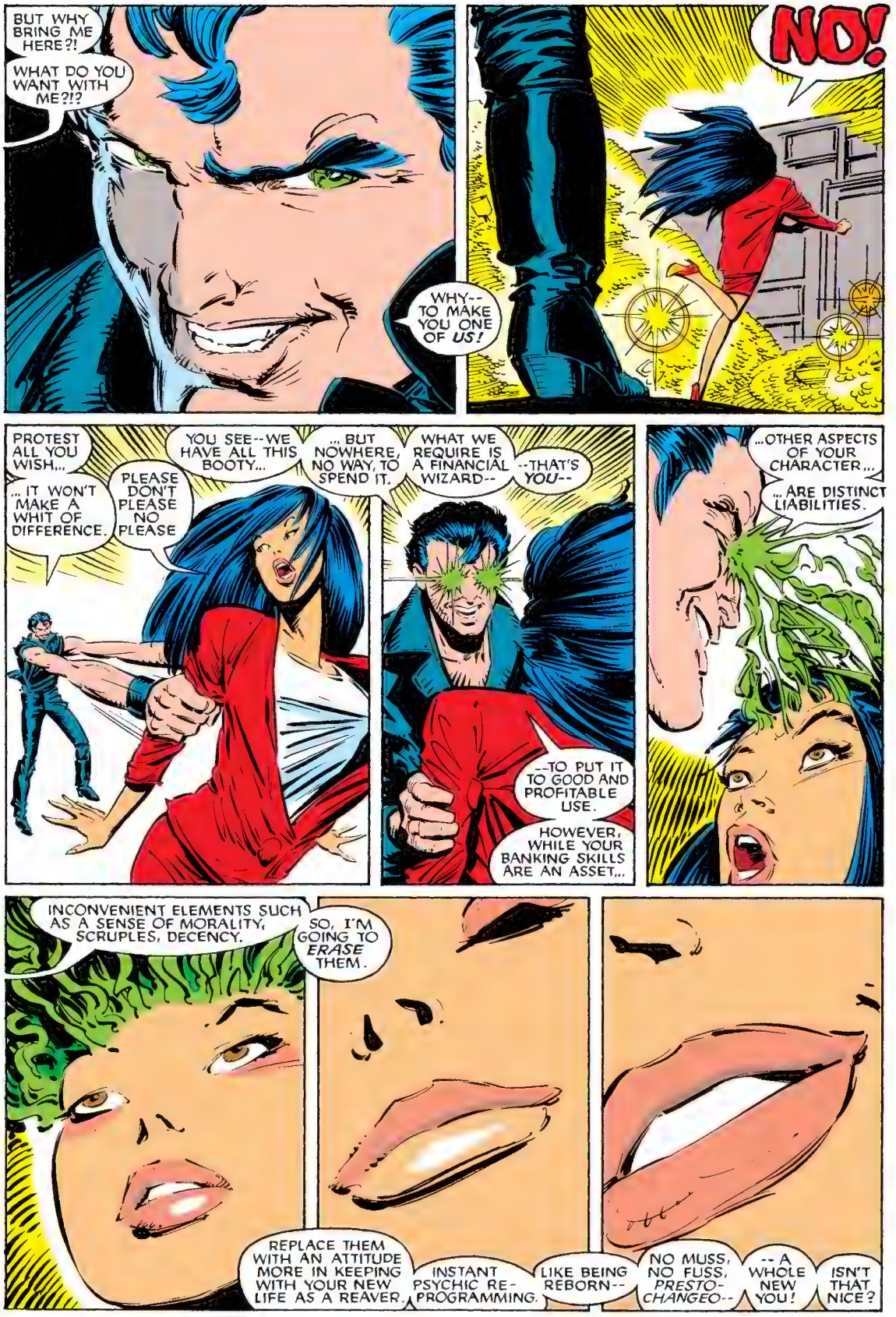
AND SO...
YO, PREZ--
--YOU GONNA BE A GOOD BOY...
...AN' OPEN YOUR MAIN VAULT...
... OR AM I GONNA BREAK YOUR NECK?
Gakgh-- AGHK-- glrghkk!
LOUDER, OLD MAN!
CAN'T UNDER-STAND A WORD YOU'RE SAYIN'!
STOP IT!
MY UNCLE CAN'T ANSWER-- CAN'T YOU SEE THAT--
--YOU'RE CHOKING HIM!
WHOA!
CHECK THIS OUT!
HEY, SKULLBUSTER-- BETTER WATCH YORE STEP, BRO'...
...THIS CHICA'S TOUGH!
I'M A REASONABLE MAN.
YOU WANNA SAVE THE OLD COOT, SWEETS...
...YOU PROVIDE THE COMBINATION.
THERE IS NONE.
WHEN YOU ATTACKED, THE SECURITY COMPUTERS AUTO-MATICALLY SEALED THE VAULT. THE TIMELOCK CAN'T BE OPENED FOR 24 HOURS.
WE CAN'T WAIT.
THEN, IT APPEARS YOU BUTCHERS HAVE MADE ALL THIS EFFORT-- CAUSED ALL THIS CARNAGE-- FOR NOTHING!
NO FOOLIN'???
GOLLYGOSHGEE-- I GUESS THEN WE DON'T NEED THE OLD GEEZER NO MORE.
KAK!
UNCLE!?!

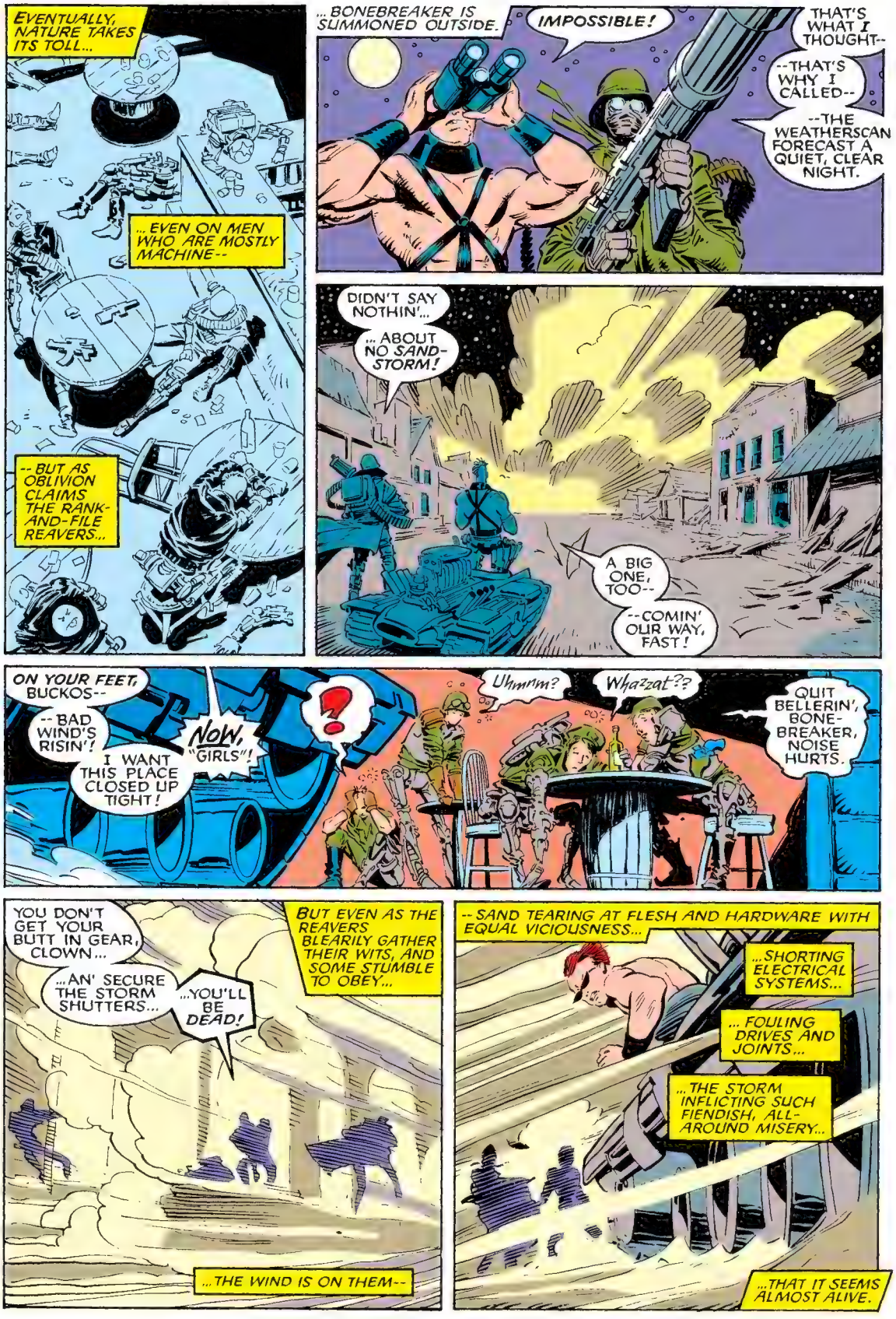

'PEARS WE'LL HAVETA DO THINGS THE HARD WAY, AFTER ALL.
NO PROB.
LIKE I ALWAYS SAY, SKULL...
YOU WANNA JOB DONE WELL...
... IT PAYS TO BE PREPARED...
LET ME GO!
PERISH THE THOUGHT.
DELIGHTFUL CREATURE...
...YOU AND I ARE TO BECOME...
... THE BEST OF FRIENDS.
...TO DO IT YOURSELF.
ZSSSSS
LORDY, WHAT A WONDERFUL SIGHT!
CLOCK'S RUNNIN', REAVERS.
SO DON'T DAWDLE!
KOM!
NEW TOY, PRETTYBOY?
A RECRUIT, ACTUALLY.
JESSAN HOAN.
FINANCIAL WIZ, PAR EXCELLENCE.
KLAK!
JUST WHAT THE DOC ORDERED.
THOUGH, THE WAY SHE'S STRUGGLIN'...
..."TIGER" MIGHT BE A BETTER NAME.
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA!
SAY "SO LONG" TO YOUR FAMILY, TIGER-GAL!
WE'RE TAKING YOU TO YOUR REWARD...
...I'M SENDING THEM TO THEIRS!

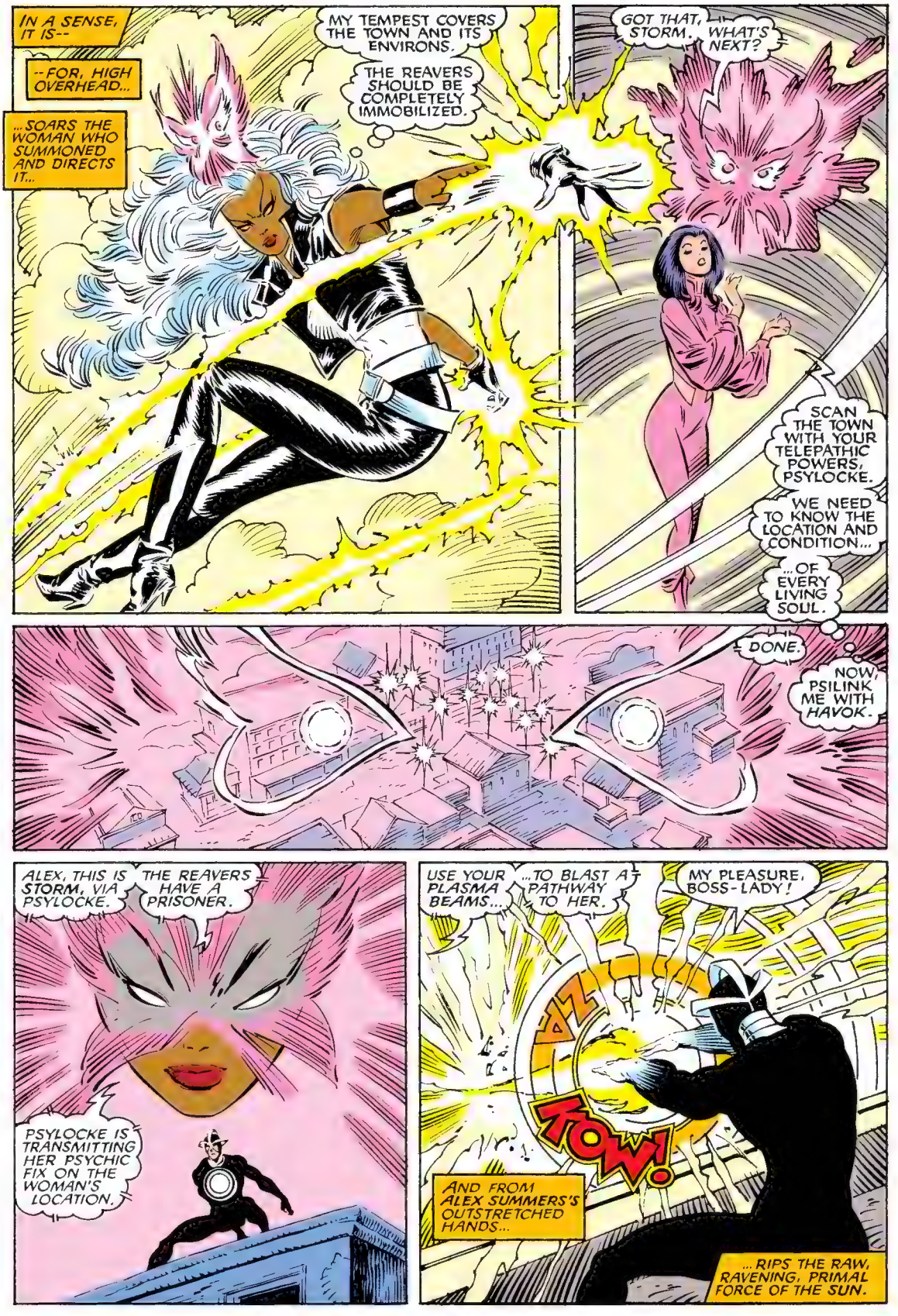
SHE SCREAMS HER THROAT RAW...
...HER CRIES MINGLING WITH THOSE OF HER RELATIVES...
...AS BONEBREAKER CUTS THEM DOWN.
THEN, IN A BLINK OF BLINDING LIGHT, FULL DAY IN SINGAPORE...
...GIVES WAY TO SUNSET...
...ROUGHLY 3500 MILES EASTWARD...
...IN AUSTRALIA.
A WILD, DESOLATE LAND...
...THIS HEART OF THE FIFTH AND MOST REMOTE OF EARTH'S CONTINENTS.
A PLACE THAT IN MANY WAYS...
...APPEARS AS THE WORLD DID, WHEN IT WAS YOUNG, RAW, AND UNTEMPERED BY EITHER ELEMENTS...
...OR MAN.
BARELY TWO CENTURIES HAVE PASSED SINCE THE EUROPEANS CAME, SAW, CONQUERED.
BEFORE, THIS WAS THE PROVINCE OF THE PEOPLE WE CALL ABORIGINES...
...WHO NOT SO MUCH LIVED ON THE LAND...
...BUT ACTUALLY SEEMED ONE WITH IT.
WAY TO GO, GATEWAY!
YOU BROUGHT US HOME, MATE, SAFE AN' SOUND, JUST LIKE ALWAYS!


HE MAKES NO REPLY...
...THIS THIN, WIZENED MAN AS WEATHERED AS THE HILLS...
...AND, SOME JOKE (BUT NEVER IN HIS PRESENCE)...
...PROBABLY AS OLD.
HE MERELY WHIRLS HIS BULL ROARER UNTIL THE LAST OF THE CYBORG RAIDERS HAS EMERGED THROUGH THE PORTAL...
...THEN STOPS.
AND WITH THE SILENCE--
--SUDDEN, EERIE, AS DISQUIETING AS IT IS ALL-ENCOMPASSING--
--HIS BONFIRE FADES TO EMBERS...
...THE "GATEWAY" PORTAL CLOSES.
MAN, I'LL NEVER GET USED TO HOW DARK IT GETS OUT HERE, BONEBREAKER, HOW QUICK.
NO BIG DEAL, SKULL.
I CAN LIGHT THINGS UP, BRIGHT AS DAY...
...WHENEVER I PLEASE.
OL' COOT LOOKS ANGRY, BOSS.
DON'T MIND.
HE CAN LOOK ANY WHICH WAY HE PLEASES...
...SO LONG AS HE DOES WHAT HE'S TOLD.
BUT MARK ME, GATEWAY--
--ANY FUNNY STUFF, AN' THE REAVERS'LL TRASH YOUR HOLY PLACE BEYOND ALL HOPE O' RECONSECRATION--
--AN' THEN, YOUR PEOPLE WILL NEVER KNOW PEACE.
THEY'LL WANDER THE DREAMLANDS, SLAVE TO OUTSIGN SPIRITS, TO THE END OF TIME AN' BEYOND!

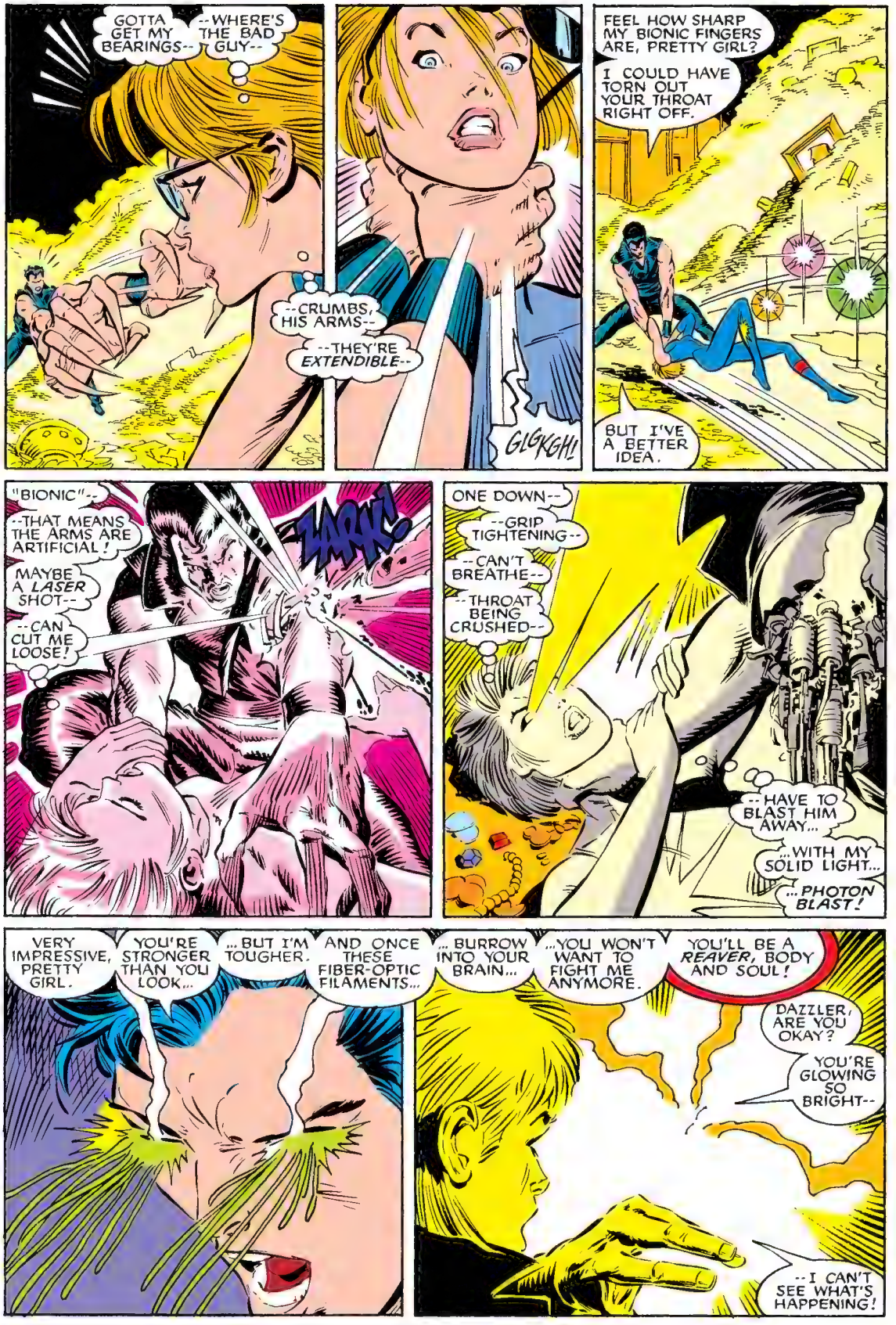
AFTER EVERY CAPER, THERE'S ALWAYS A PARTY.
TONIGHT'S NO DIFFERENT.
WITHIN AN HOUR OF THE REAVERS' RETURN...
HOTEL
...EVERYBODY'S HAPPY.
THEY PLAY AS HARD AS THEY FIGHT...
...WITH NO RULES...
SNAP!
...NOT FAR AWAY, UNDERGROUND...
WHERE AM I?!
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?!!
OUR HIDE-OUT, OF COURSE.
AND SINCE WE LOOTED YOUR TREASURE VAULT, LITTLE TIGER...
BOW POW!
... AND LESS MERCY.
BUT WHILE THESE FESTIVITIES RAGE EVER MORE WILDLY OUT OF CONTROL...
...IT SEEMS ONLY POLITE TO SHOW YOU OURS.
Gasp!?!

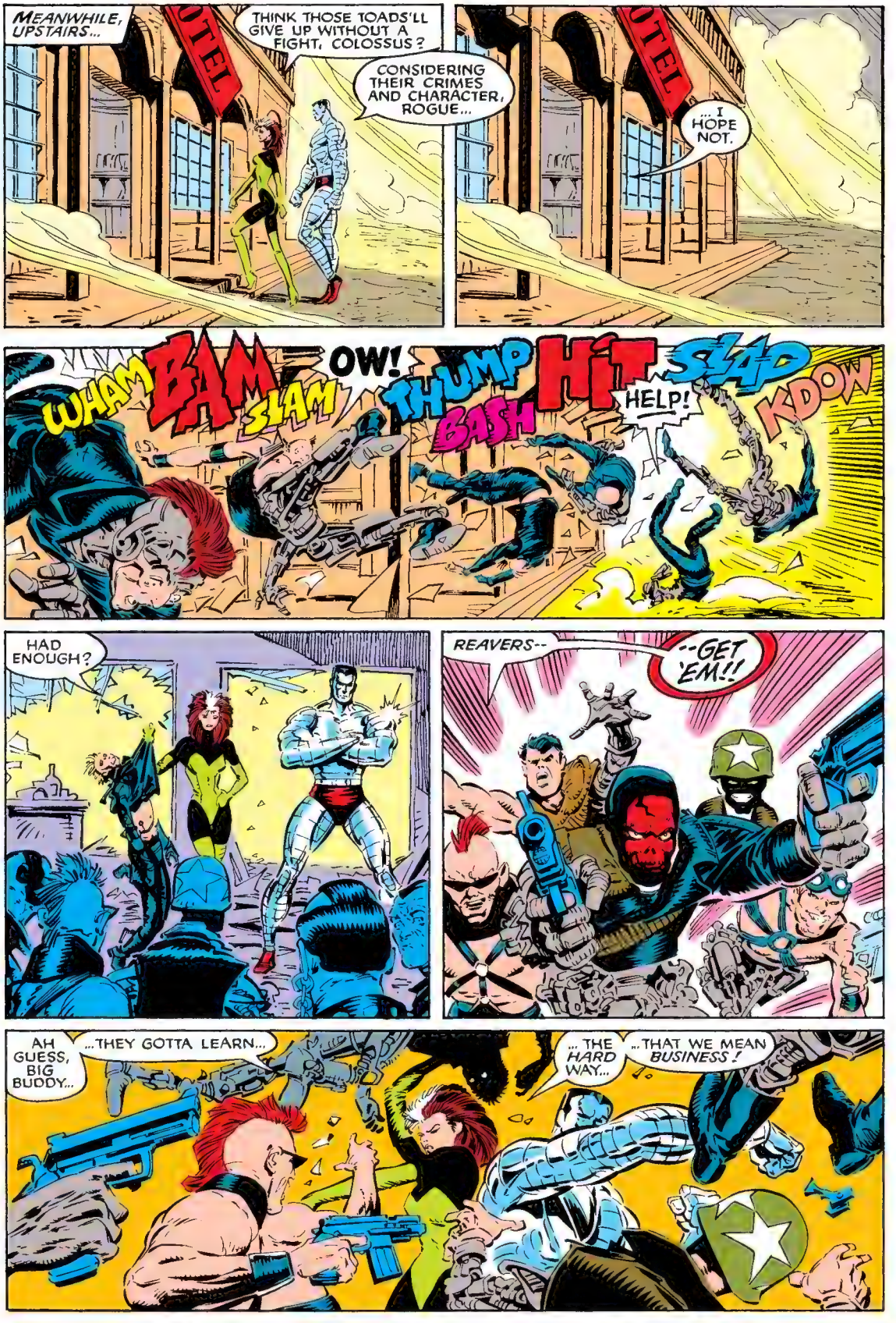

BUT WHY BRING ME HERE?!
WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?!?
WHY-- TO MAKE YOU ONE OF US!
NO!
PROTEST ALL YOU WISH...
... IT WON'T MAKE A WHIT OF DIFFERENCE.
PLEASE DON'T PLEASE NO PLEASE
YOU SEE--WE HAVE ALL THIS BOOTY...
... BUT NOWHERE, NO WAY, TO SPEND IT.
WHAT WE REQUIRE IS A FINANCIAL WIZARD--
--THAT'S YOU--
--TO PUT IT TO GOOD AND PROFITABLE USE.
HOWEVER, WHILE YOUR BANKING SKILLS ARE AN ASSET...
...OTHER ASPECTS OF YOUR CHARACTER...
... ARE DISTINCT LIABILITIES.
INCONVENIENT ELEMENTS SUCH AS A SENSE OF MORALITY, SCRUPLES, DECENCY.
SO, I'M GOING TO ERASE THEM.
REPLACE THEM WITH AN ATTITUDE MORE IN KEEPING WITH YOUR NEW LIFE AS A REAVER.
INSTANT PSYCHIC RE-PROGRAMMING.
LIKE BEING REBORN--
NO MUSS, NO FUSS, PRESTO-CHANGEO--
-- A WHOLE NEW YOU!
ISN'T THAT NICE?


EVENTUALLY, NATURE TAKES ITS TOLL...
... EVEN ON MEN WHO ARE MOSTLY MACHINE--
--BUT AS OBLIVION CLAIMS THE RANK-AND-FILE REAVERS...
... BONEBREAKER IS SUMMONED OUTSIDE.
IMPOSSIBLE!
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT--
--THAT'S WHY I CALLED--
--THE WEATHERSCAN FORECAST A QUIET, CLEAR NIGHT.
DIDN'T SAY NOTHIN'...
... ABOUT NO SAND-STORM!
A BIG ONE, TOO--
--COMIN' OUR WAY, FAST!
ON YOUR FEET, BUCKOS--
--BAD WIND'S RISIN'!
I WANT THIS PLACE CLOSED UP TIGHT!
NOW, "GIRLS"!
?
Uhmmm?
Whazzat??
QUIT BELLERIN', BONE-BREAKER, NOISE HURTS.
YOU DON'T GET YOUR BUTT IN GEAR, CLOWN...
...AN' SECURE THE STORM SHUTTERS...
...YOU'LL BE DEAD!
BUT EVEN AS THE REAVERS BLEARILY GATHER THEIR WITS, AND SOME STUMBLE TO OBEY...
...THE WIND IS ON THEM--
--SAND TEARING AT FLESH AND HARDWARE WITH EQUAL VICIOUSNESS...
...SHORTING ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS...
... FOULING DRIVES AND JOINTS...
...THE STORM INFLICTING SUCH FIENDISH, ALL-AROUND MISERY...
...THAT IT SEEMS ALMOST ALIVE.


IN A SENSE, IT IS--
--FOR, HIGH OVERHEAD...
...SOARS THE WOMAN WHO SUMMONED AND DIRECTS IT...
MY TEMPEST COVERS THE TOWN AND ITS ENVIRONS.
THE REAVERS SHOULD BE COMPLETELY IMMOBILIZED.
GOT THAT, STORM. WHAT'S NEXT?
SCAN THE TOWN WITH YOUR TELEPATHIC POWERS, PSYLOCKE.
WE NEED TO KNOW THE LOCATION AND CONDITION...
...OF EVERY LIVING SOUL.
DONE.
NOW, PSILINK ME WITH HAVOK.
ALEX, THIS IS STORM, VIA PSYLOCKE.
THE REAVERS HAVE A PRISONER.
PSYLOCKE IS TRANSMITTING HER PSYCHIC FIX ON THE WOMAN'S LOCATION.
USE YOUR PLASMA BEAMS...
...TO BLAST A PATHWAY TO HER.
MY PLEASURE, BOSS-LADY!
ZAP
TOW!
AND FROM ALEX SUMMERS'S OUTSTRETCHED HANDS...
...RIPS THE RAW, RAVENING, PRIMAL FORCE OF THE SUN.

AND SO...
?!?
ZAKOW!
VISITORS?
HOW NICE!
BE PATIENT, WE'LL BE THROUGH HERE MOMENTARILY.
DAZZLER-- THAT MONSTERMAN IS STEALING HER DAYS!
WHAT?!
REPLACING HER LIFELIGHT WITH HIS OWN!
HE'S SO ANGRY, AS THOUGH THE SAME THING HAD BEEN DONE TO HIM!
YAI!
ELP!
LEAVE HER ALONE, MONSTERMAN!
MY EYES!
HE'S GONE AS CRAZY AS WOLVERINE--
--whoops--
--MOUND'S TOO STEEP--
--oh gosh--
--CAN'T GET MY BALANCE--
--oh golly--
--MAINTAIN A HANDHOLD--
--oh HELP!
DON'T BE SCARED, MISS!
YOU'RE SAFE AND RESCUED NOW!
KRAK!
Ow!
Ow!
Ow!
Ow!
Ow!
THIS IS...
...SO EMBARRASSING!

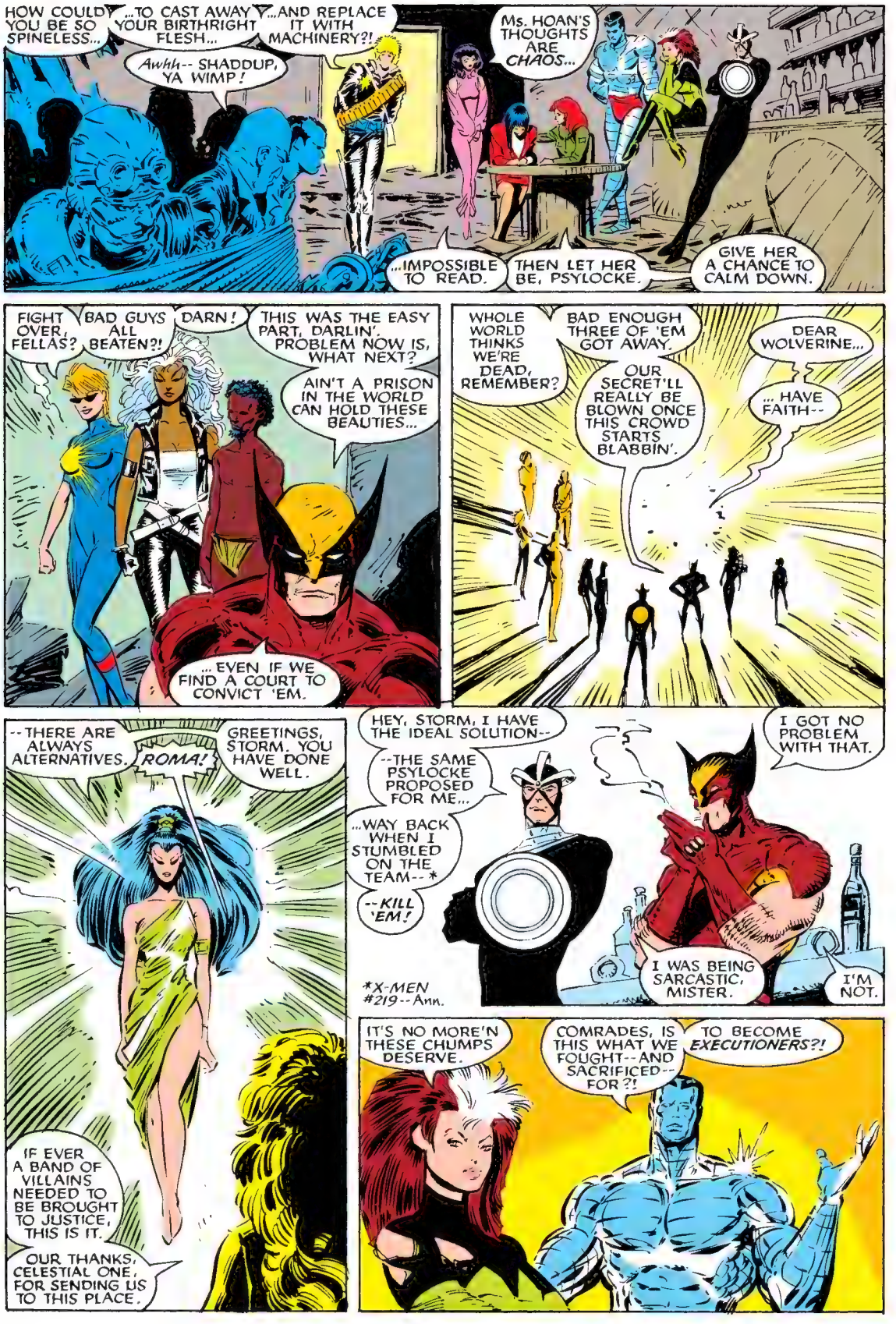

GOTTA GET MY BEARINGS--
--WHERE'S THE BAD GUY--
--CRUMBS, HIS ARMS--
--THEY'RE EXTENDIBLE--
GLGKGH!
FEEL HOW SHARP MY BIONIC FINGERS ARE, PRETTY GIRL?
I COULD HAVE TORN OUT YOUR THROAT RIGHT OFF.
BUT I'VE A BETTER IDEA.
"BIONIC"--
--THAT MEANS THE ARMS ARE ARTIFICIAL!
MAYBE A LASER SHOT--
--CAN CUT ME LOOSE!
ZARK!
ONE DOWN--
--GRIP TIGHTENING--
--CAN'T BREATHE--
--THROAT BEING CRUSHED--
--HAVE TO BLAST HIM AWAY...
...WITH MY SOLID LIGHT...
...PHOTON BLAST!
VERY IMPRESSIVE, PRETTY GIRL.
YOU'RE STRONGER THAN YOU LOOK...
...BUT I'M TOUGHER.
AND ONCE THESE FIBER-OPTIC FILAMENTS...
... BURROW INTO YOUR BRAIN...
...YOU WON'T WANT TO FIGHT ME ANYMORE.
YOU'LL BE A REAVER, BODY AND SOUL!
DAZZLER, ARE YOU OKAY?
YOU'RE GLOWING SO BRIGHT--
--I CAN'T SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING!

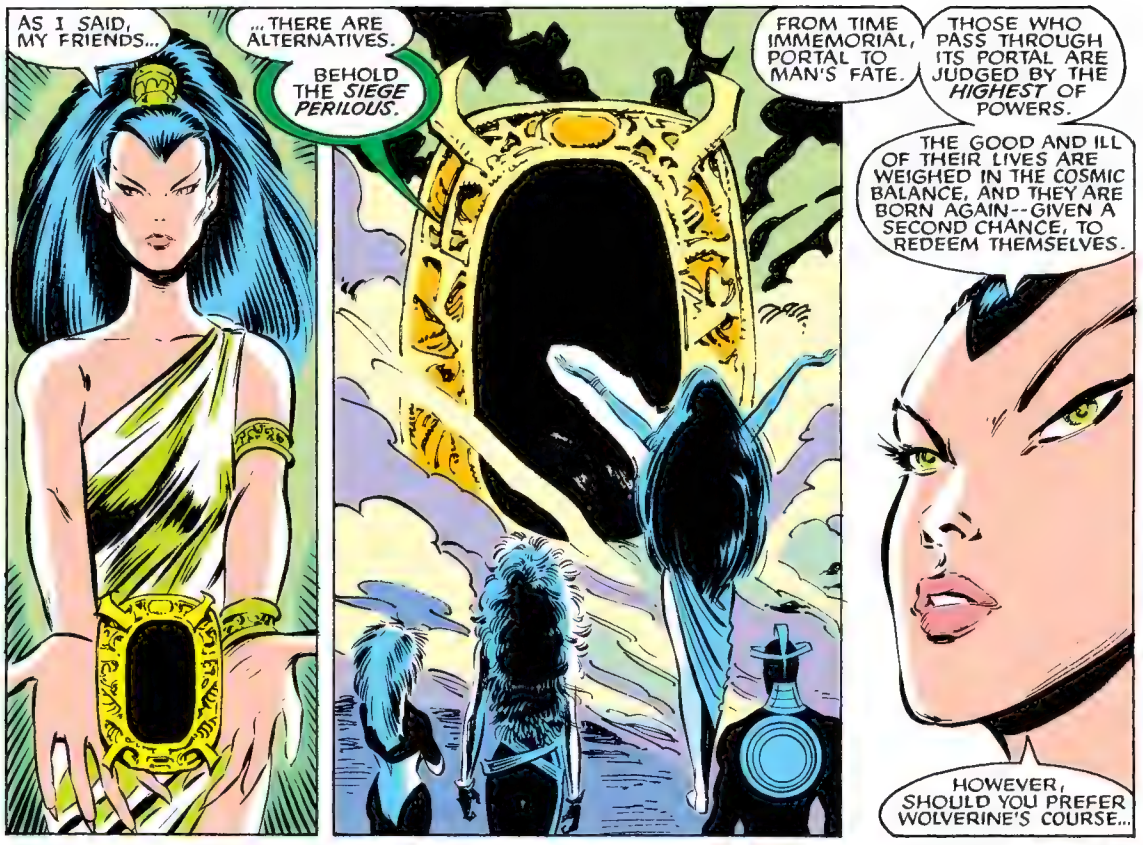

MEANWHILE, UPSTAIRS...
THINK THOSE TOADS'LL GIVE UP WITHOUT A FIGHT, COLOSSUS?
CONSIDERING THEIR CRIMES AND CHARACTER, ROGUE...
... I HOPE NOT.
WHAM
BAM
SLAM
OW!
THUMP
BASH
HIT
HELP!
SLAP
KDOW
HAD ENOUGH?
REAVERS--
--GET 'EM!!
AH GUESS, BIG BUDDY...
...THEY GOTTA LEARN...
... THE HARD WAY...
...THAT WE MEAN BUSINESS!

MY BULLETS--
--BOUNCING OFF!
WHAT D'YOU EXPECT, CHUMP?
HE'S ARMOR...
... AN' AH'M PRETTY NEAR INVULNERABLE!
FACE FACTS, LAMOS, Y'ALL ARE WAY OUTCLASSED!
WE'LL SEE HOW SMART YOU TALK, BIMBO...
... AFTER I TEAR YOU
LORDY-- NO!
ROGUE'S STRENGTH ISN'T WHAT MAKES HER A MUTANT.
IT'S THE POWER TO ABSORB OTHER PEOPLE'S PSYCHE AND ABILITIES. THE MOMENT BONEBREAKER GRABS HER-- HIS HAND ON HER BARE ARM-- SHE'S INSTANTLY FLOODED WITH THE TOTALITY OF HIS BEING.
THE PROCESS KNOCKS HIM OUT.
SHE ISN'T SO LUCKY.
SKULLFACE-- MOVING IN ON ROGUE...
... WHILE SHE'S TOO LOOPED TO CARE!
ZAM!
BACK OFF, BUSTER!
IT'S CLEAR THESE BOZOS ARE MOSTLY ROBOTS...
... BUT IT STILL GIVES ME THE CREEPS WHEN I BLAST 'EM LIKE THAT.
CAN'T HELP WONDERING IF IT HURTS.
HOW YOU DOIN', PARTNER?
THOUGHTS-- MEM'RIES-- FOULEST KIND--
--WHERE IS THAT SCUNGE-BARGE--
--BONE-BREAKER, AH WANT YOUR HEART!
STILL BREATHIN'-- SCAN-STATS MOSTLY GREEN--
KLUDD!
-- GONNA ASSUME YOU'LL RECOVER.
TIME TO SCAMPER, BONE.
WE'RE DONE HERE...
...HAVETA START AGAIN...
... SOMEPLACE ELSE.

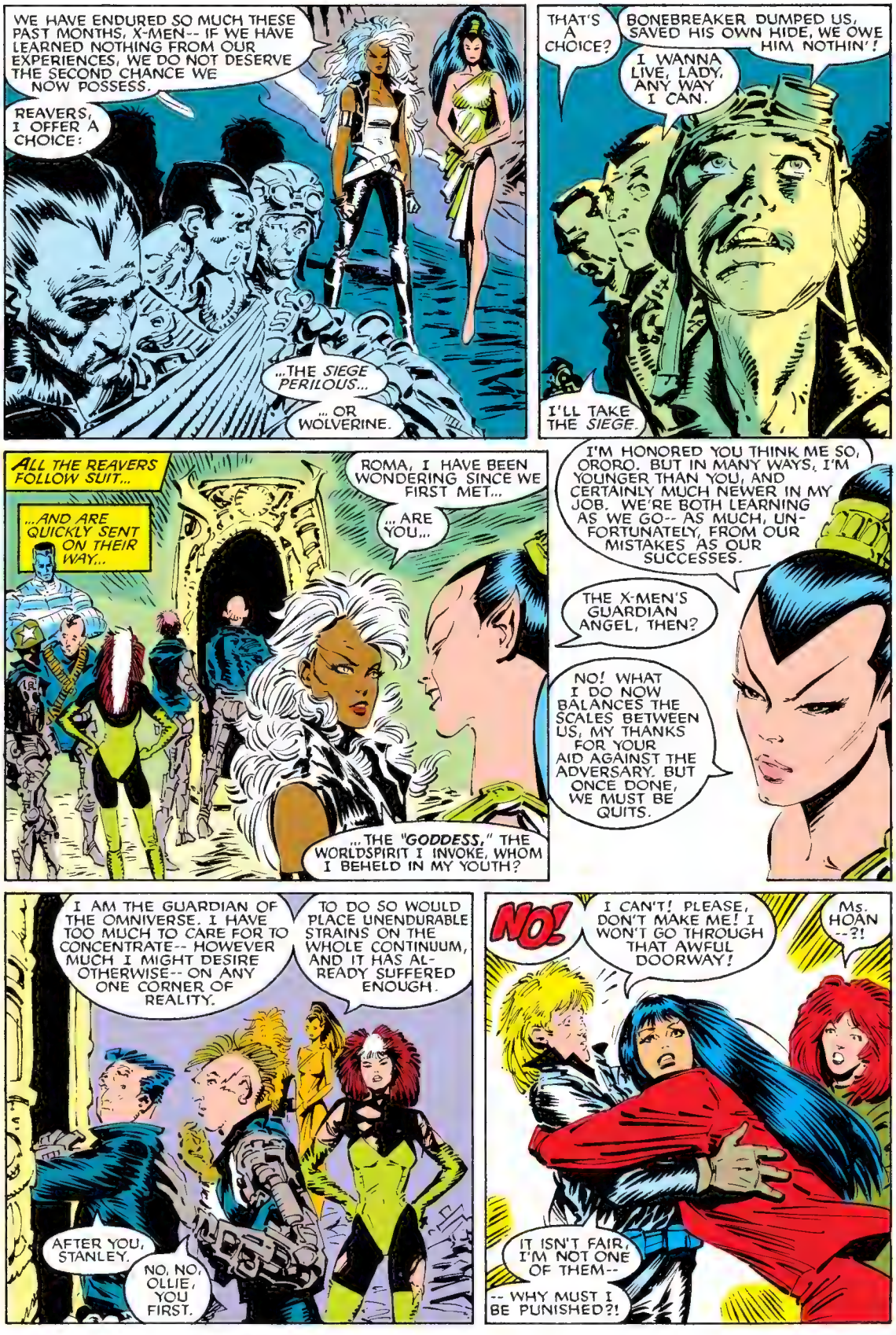
ELSEWHERE...
UP ON THE ROOF!
INTRUDER!
BLAST HIM!
THEY DO THEIR BEST.
AGAINST WOLVERINE...
...IT ISN'T ENOUGH.

WHUAHOPPIN'A'ME?!?
SKULL, WHA'-CHUDOIN'-MAN?!!?
THAT GIRL--
--SHE ZAPPED YOU, MAN.
AN' HER BUDDIES'RE NAILIN' THE REAVERS.
WE STAY, WE'LL END UP THE SAME--
--ON THE JUNKYARD!
--OLD MAN--
--GATEWAY--
--PORTAL US AN' ACCOUNTS ARE SQUARED!
"YOU'RE RELEASED FROM ALL DEBTS AN' VOWS!"
MY GRACIOUS, SKULLBUSTER--
--I TRUST YOU'RE NOT PLANNING...
...ON LEAVING WITHOUT ME.
Hawhw!
THOUGHT YOUR CHARM...
...WAS IRRESISTIBLE.
DID I SAY IT WASN'T?
BLONDIE AND I ARE FAR FROM FINISHED.
GONE.
OLD ABO MUST BE SOME KIND'A TELEPORTER.
NO WAY TO FOLLOW THEIR TRAIL...
...BUT I CAN AT LEAST MAKE SURE...
SNIKT
...THIS "GATE-WAY" DOESN'T OPEN AGAIN.
NO, WOLVERINE!
SHEATHE YOUR CLAWS.
FOR ALL HIS ACTIONS...
...I SENSE THIS MAN IS NO MORE VILLAIN--OR REAVER--
--THAN WE.


HOW COULD YOU BE SO SPINELESS...
...TO CAST AWAY YOUR BIRTHRIGHT FLESH...
...AND REPLACE IT WITH MACHINERY?!
Awhh-- SHADDUP, YA WIMP!
Ms. HOAN'S THOUGHTS ARE CHAOS...
...IMPOSSIBLE TO READ.
THEN LET HER BE, PSYLOCKE.
GIVE HER A CHANCE TO CALM DOWN.
FIGHT OVER, FELLAS?
BAD GUYS ALL BEATEN?!
DARN!
THIS WAS THE EASY PART, DARLIN'. PROBLEM NOW IS, WHAT NEXT?
AIN'T A PRISON IN THE WORLD CAN HOLD THESE BEAUTIES...
... EVEN IF WE FIND A COURT TO CONVICT 'EM.
WHOLE WORLD THINKS WE'RE DEAD, REMEMBER?
BAD ENOUGH THREE OF 'EM GOT AWAY.
OUR SECRET'LL REALLY BE BLOWN ONCE THIS CROWD STARTS BLABBIN'.
DEAR WOLVERINE...
... HAVE FAITH--
--THERE ARE ALWAYS ALTERNATIVES.
ROMA!
GREETINGS, STORM. YOU HAVE DONE WELL.
IF EVER A BAND OF VILLAINS NEEDED TO BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE, THIS IS IT.
OUR THANKS, CELESTIAL ONE, FOR SENDING US TO THIS PLACE.
HEY, STORM, I HAVE THE IDEAL SOLUTION--
--THE SAME PSYLOCKE PROPOSED FOR ME...
...WAY BACK WHEN I STUMBLED ON THE TEAM--*
--KILL 'EM!
I GOT NO PROBLEM WITH THAT.
I WAS BEING SARCASTIC, MISTER.
I'M NOT.
*X-MEN #219--Ann.
IT'S NO MORE'N THESE CHUMPS DESERVE.
COMRADES, IS THIS WHAT WE FOUGHT--AND SACRIFICED--FOR?!
TO BECOME EXECUTIONERS?!


AS I SAID, MY FRIENDS...
...THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES.
BEHOLD THE *SIEGE PERILOUS*.
FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL, PORTAL TO MAN'S FATE.
THOSE WHO PASS THROUGH ITS PORTAL ARE JUDGED BY THE *HIGHEST* OF POWERS.
THE GOOD AND ILL OF THEIR LIVES ARE WEIGHED IN THE COSMIC BALANCE, AND THEY ARE BORN AGAIN--GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE, TO REDEEM THEMSELVES.
HOWEVER, SHOULD YOU PREFER WOLVERINE'S COURSE...

...THEIRS WILL BE THE *TRUE DEATH*, THEIR SPIRITS IRREPARABLY SHATTERED AND CAST INTO THE ULTIMATE VOID.
I CONFESS, ROMA, WHAT YOU'RE SAYING MAKES NO SENSE TO ME...
...BUT WHAT ARE WE AFTER HERE, PEOPLE--WHAT'S OUR TRUE PURPOSE--
--JUSTICE OR VENGEANCE?!
SOMETIMES, BOY, VENGEANCE *IS* JUSTICE.
THE REAVERS SHOWED NO MERCY, WHY SHOULD WE?
BECAUSE, PSYLOCKE, WE ARE NOT THEM.


WE HAVE ENDURED SO MUCH THESE PAST MONTHS, X-MEN-- IF WE HAVE LEARNED NOTHING FROM OUR EXPERIENCES, WE DO NOT DESERVE THE SECOND CHANCE WE NOW POSSESS.
REAVERS, I OFFER A CHOICE:
...THE SIEGE PERILOUS...
... OR WOLVERINE.
THAT'S A CHOICE?
BONEBREAKER DUMPED US, SAVED HIS OWN HIDE, WE OWE HIM NOTHIN'!
I WANNA LIVE, LADY, ANY WAY I CAN.
I'LL TAKE THE SIEGE.
ALL THE REAVERS FOLLOW SUIT...
...AND ARE QUICKLY SENT ON THEIR WAY...
ROMA, I HAVE BEEN WONDERING SINCE WE FIRST MET...
... ARE YOU...
... THE "GODDESS," THE WORLDSPIRIT I INVOKE, WHOM I BEHELD IN MY YOUTH?
I'M HONORED YOU THINK ME SO, ORORO. BUT IN MANY WAYS, I'M YOUNGER THAN YOU, AND CERTAINLY MUCH NEWER IN MY JOB. WE'RE BOTH LEARNING AS WE GO-- AS MUCH, UNFORTUNATELY, FROM OUR MISTAKES AS OUR SUCCESSES.
THE X-MEN'S GUARDIAN ANGEL, THEN?
NO! WHAT I DO NOW BALANCES THE SCALES BETWEEN US, MY THANKS FOR YOUR AID AGAINST THE ADVERSARY. BUT ONCE DONE, WE MUST BE QUITS.
I AM THE GUARDIAN OF THE OMNIVERSE. I HAVE TOO MUCH TO CARE FOR TO CONCENTRATE-- HOWEVER MUCH I MIGHT DESIRE OTHERWISE-- ON ANY ONE CORNER OF REALITY.
TO DO SO WOULD PLACE UNENDURABLE STRAINS ON THE WHOLE CONTINUUM, AND IT HAS ALREADY SUFFERED ENOUGH.
AFTER YOU, STANLEY.
NO, NO, OLLIE, YOU FIRST.
NO!
I CAN'T! PLEASE, DON'T MAKE ME! I WON'T GO THROUGH THAT AWFUL DOORWAY!
MS. HOAN --?!
IT ISN'T FAIR, I'M NOT ONE OF THEM--
-- WHY MUST I BE PUNISHED?!

DON'T CRY, YOU'LL BE FINE, WE'LL KEEP YOU SAFE.
LADY HAS A POINT. SHE'S A VICTIM, SHE DOESN'T DESERVE TO SHARE THE REAVERS' FATE.
BUT HOW CAN WE RELEASE HER, KNOWING WHAT SHE DOES?
MAYBE, SOMETIMES, WE HAVE TO TRUST PEOPLE.
IF WE SACRIFICE AN INNOCENT--NO MATTER HOW NOBLE OR NECESSARY OUR RATIONALIZATION--THEN WE'VE BECOME WHAT WE'VE SWORN TO FIGHT.
HAVOK IS RIGHT.
THE RISK MUST BE TAKEN.
ROMA, FORGIVE ME FOR ASKING...
...BUT IS THERE ANY WAY YOU CAN HELP?
THE POWERS OF TIME AND SPACE ARE MINE TO COMMAND, WIND-RIDER.
I SHALL CAST HER HOME...
"...TO THE PLACE AND MOMENT...
"...FROM WHICH SHE WAS ABDUCTED.
"FROM HER LIPS, YOUR LEGEND WILL BEGIN TO GROW.
KNOW, X-MEN, THAT THE SIEGE PERILOUS IS FOR YOUR USE AS WELL. AS AVALON WAS FOR KING ARTHUR, SO MAY THE SIEGE BE FOR YOU.
A RELEASE FROM THE TRIALS AND TREVAILS OF THIS WORLD...
...GATEWAY TO A PARADISE WELL EARNED...
...IF SUCH IS YOUR DESIRE.

WHAT THEN OF THE DREAM-- OUR TEACHER, PROFESSOR XAVIER'S DREAM-- THAT BROUGHT US TOGETHER...
...AND NOW, MORE THAN EVER, GIVES OUR LIVES MEANING?
YOU CALL US "HEROES" AND "LEGENDS." TO ME, ROMA, THOSE ARE LABELS, WITH LITTLE MEANING. ANOTHER PERSON'S DESCRIPTION OF ME, NOT MY OWN.
I AM PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH RASPUTIN-- I AM COLOSSUS-- I AM AN X-MAN. THAT IS IMPORTANT. THAT IS WHAT MATTERS.
AND WHILE I BREATHE, I WILL FIGHT WITH ALL MY HEART FOR XAVIER'S DREAM, AND THE BETTER WORLD IT REPRESENTS!
MY "LITTLE BROTHER" SPEAKS FOR US ALL, I THINK, ROMA.
SAVE YOUR SIEGE PERILOUS FOR ANOTHER TIME.
WE ARE FAR FROM DONE WITH OURS.
SO BE IT.
BUT YOUR "DEATH," X-MEN, WAS MORE THAN MERE HYPERBOLE.
IN A SENSE, YOU STAND APART FROM LIFE.
YOU CANNOT BE DETECTED BY ANY AGENCY OTHER THAN YOURSELVES-- LIVING OR MECHANICAL, MAGICKAL OR SCIENTIFIC-- NEITHER BEING, NOR POWER, NOR ENCHANTMENT.
YOU MAY BE SEEN BY THE NAKED EYE-- AND BY THE DEVICES OF THIS PLACE, YOUR NEW HOME -- BUT THAT IS ALL.
FINALLY, I LEAVE THE SIEGE IN YOUR CHARGE, TO BE USED AS YOU WILL.
ONLY THE MOST BRAVE AND MOST WORTHY HAVE BEEN GRANTED SUCH AWESOME RESPONSI-BILITY--
--YOU ARE THE FIRST SO CHARGED, SO HONORED, IN OVER A THOUSAND YEARS.
YOU, MY CHILD-REN, HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY-- AND CAPABILITY-- TO LEAD YOUR WORLD...
...TO THE BRIGHTEST...
...OR DARKEST OF DESTINIES.
USE IT WELL.
FOR YOU HOLD THE FUTURE IN YOUR HANDS.
NEXT: 'twas the night...

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THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
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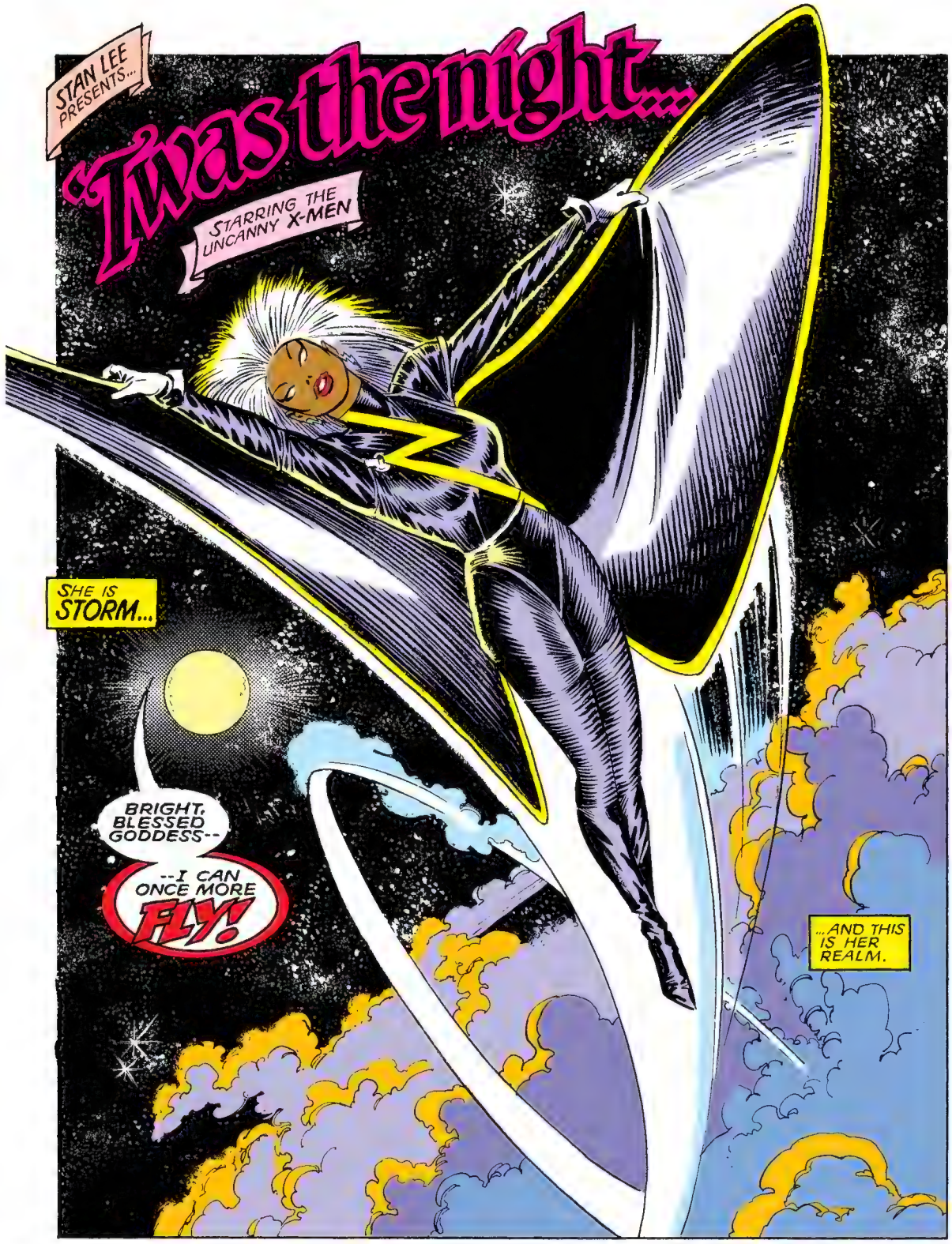


CHRIS CLAREMONT
WRITER

MARC SILVESTRI
PENCILER

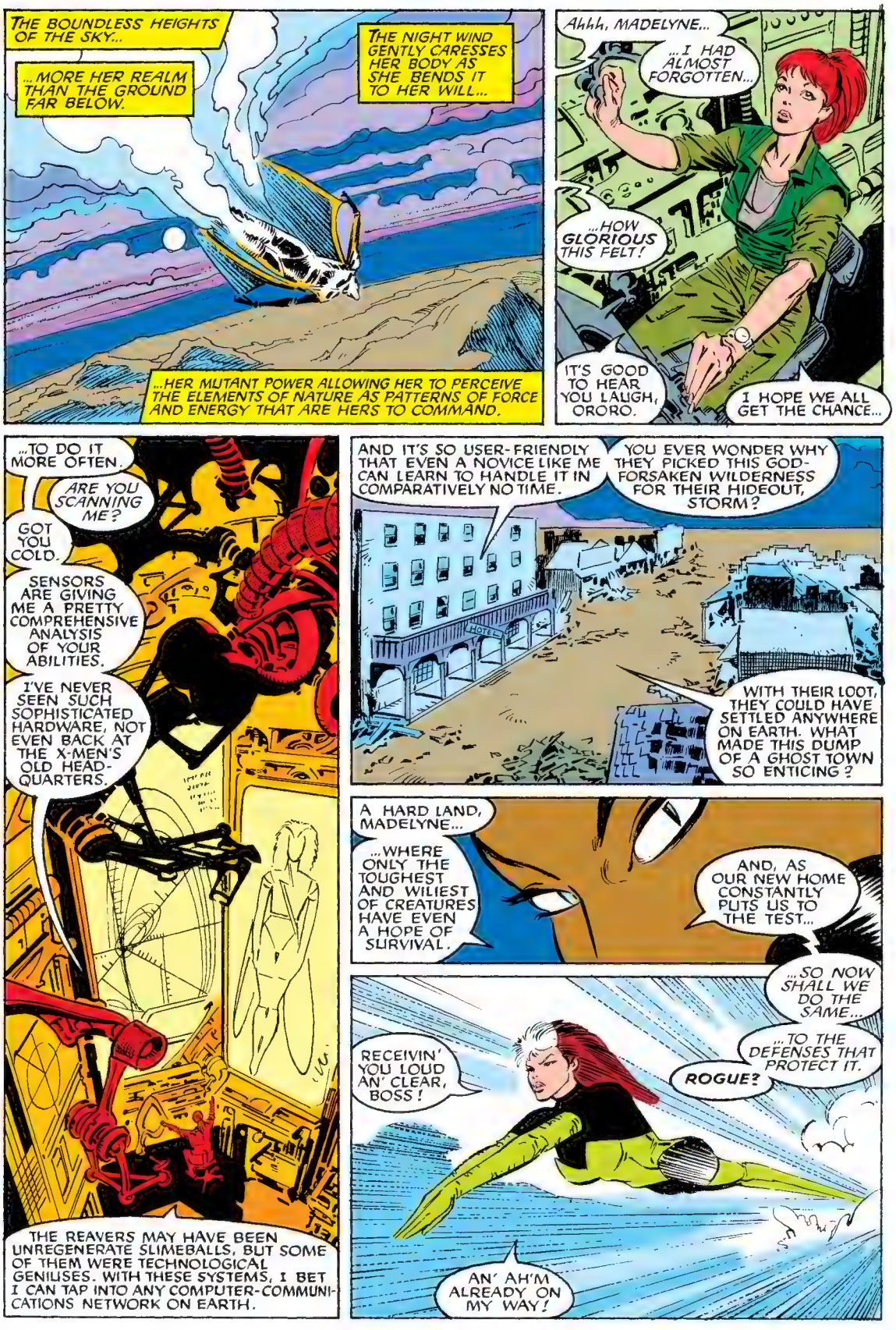
JOE RUBINSTEIN
INKER

GLYNIS OLIVER
COLORIST

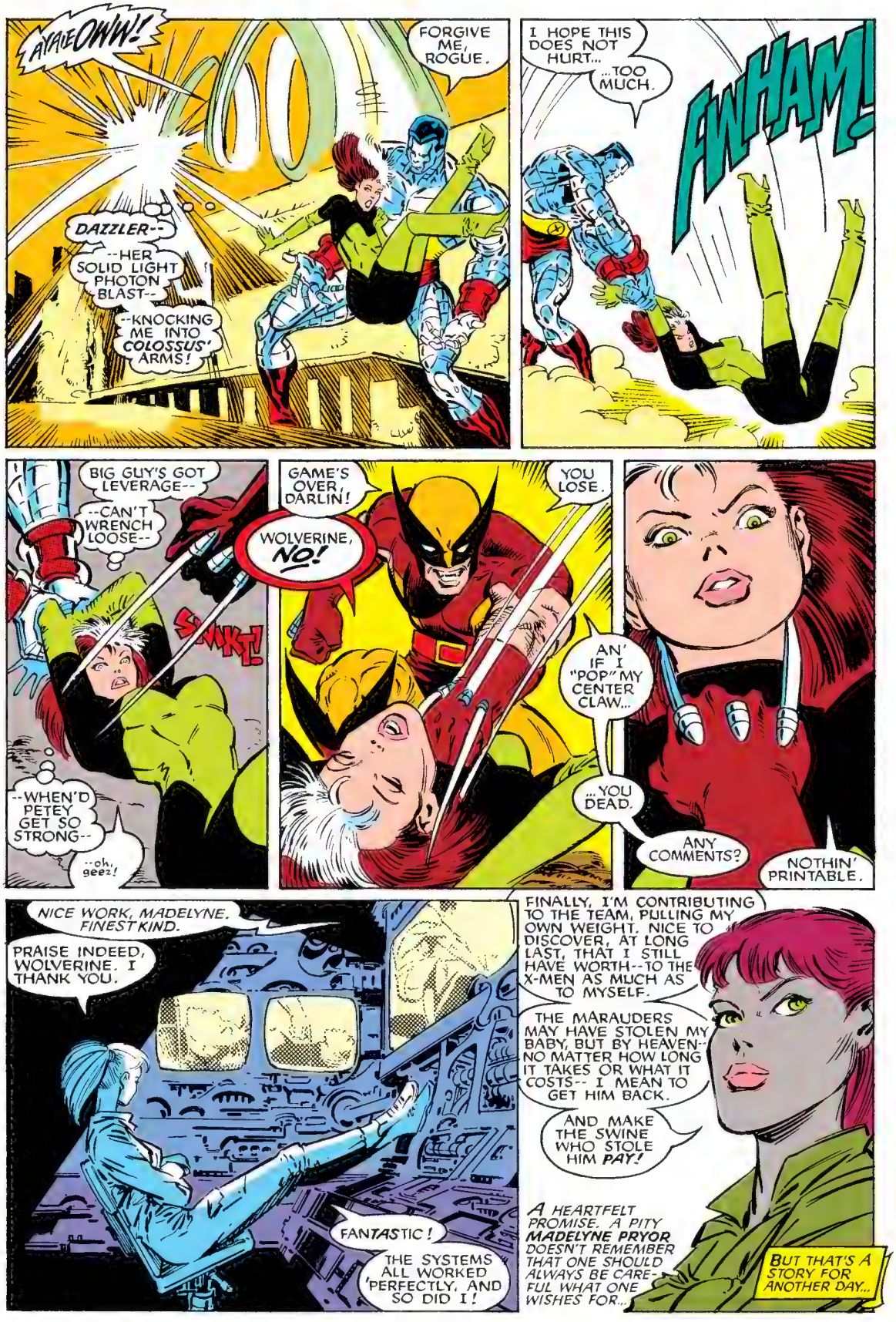
TOM ORZECHOWSKI
LETTERER

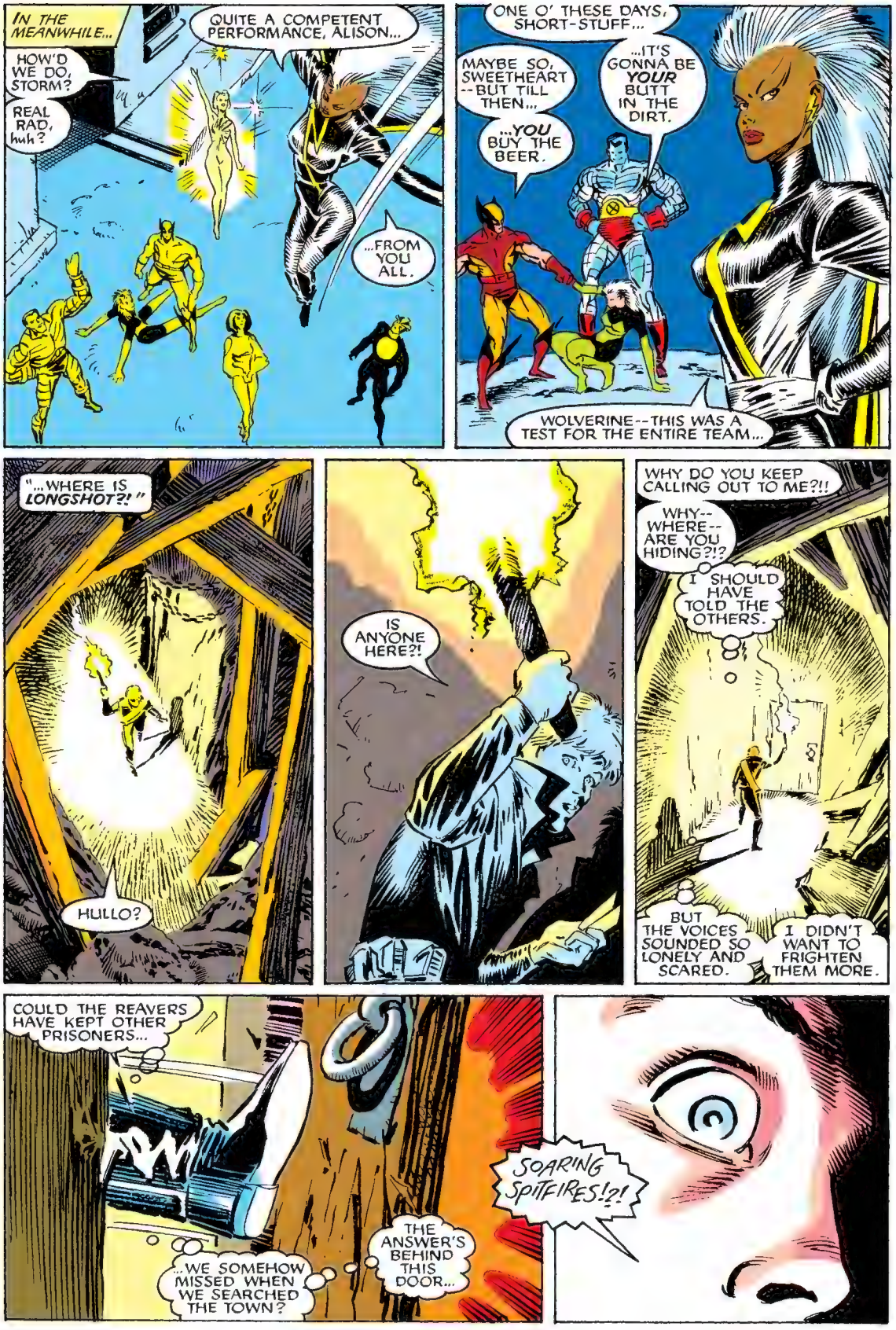
ANN NOCENTI
EDITOR

TOM DeFALCO
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF


THE BOUNDLESS HEIGHTS OF THE SKY...
...MORE HER REALM THAN THE GROUND FAR BELOW.
THE NIGHT WIND GENTLY CARESSES HER BODY AS SHE BENDS IT TO HER WILL...
...HER MUTANT POWER ALLOWING HER TO PERCEIVE THE ELEMENTS OF NATURE AS PATTERNS OF FORCE AND ENERGY THAT ARE HERS TO COMMAND.
Ahhh, MADELYNE...
...I HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN...
...HOW GLORIOUS THIS FELT!
IT'S GOOD TO HEAR YOU LAUGH, ORORO.
I HOPE WE ALL GET THE CHANCE...
...TO DO IT MORE OFTEN.
ARE YOU SCANNING ME?
GOT YOU COLD.
SENSORS ARE GIVING ME A PRETTY COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF YOUR ABILITIES.
I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH SOPHISTICATED HARDWARE, NOT EVEN BACK AT THE X-MEN'S OLD HEADQUARTERS.
THE REAVERS MAY HAVE BEEN UNREGENERATE SLIMEBALLS, BUT SOME OF THEM WERE TECHNOLOGICAL GENIUSES. WITH THESE SYSTEMS, I BET I CAN TAP INTO ANY COMPUTER-COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK ON EARTH.
AND IT'S SO USER-FRIENDLY THAT EVEN A NOVICE LIKE ME CAN LEARN TO HANDLE IT IN COMPARATIVELY NO TIME.
YOU EVER WONDER WHY THEY PICKED THIS GOD-FORSAKEN WILDERNESS FOR THEIR HIDEOUT, STORM?
HOTEL
WITH THEIR LOOT, THEY COULD HAVE SETTLED ANYWHERE ON EARTH. WHAT MADE THIS DUMP OF A GHOST TOWN SO ENTICING?
A HARD LAND, MADELYNE...
...WHERE ONLY THE TOUGHEST AND WILIEST OF CREATURES HAVE EVEN A HOPE OF SURVIVAL.
AND, AS OUR NEW HOME CONSTANTLY PUTS US TO THE TEST...
...SO NOW SHALL WE DO THE SAME...
...TO THE DEFENSES THAT PROTECT IT.
ROGUE?
RECEIVIN' YOU LOUD AN' CLEAR, BOSS!
AN' AH'M ALREADY ON MY WAY!

STAY LOW--
--BELOW THE RADAR--
--HUG THE TERRAIN--
--USE IT FOR COVER--
--AN' MOVE SO FAST--
--AH'LL BE ON TOP O' THE TEAM...
...BEFORE THEY KNOW IT--
--THAT'S THE WAY TO WIN!
CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WOLVIE'S FACE--!
THERE'S THAT ABORIGINE FELLA, GATEWAY, SITTIN' ATOP HIS ROCK.
NEVER SAYS A WORD, JUST SITS AN' WATCHES THE WORLD GO BY.
DON'T HE HAVE FAMILY, OR ANY-WHERE ELSE TO GO?!
ENOUGH LALLYGAGGIN', GIRL!
KEEP YOUR MIND ON BUSINESS--
WHUA?!?
SURPRISE, "SHUGAH!"
HAVOK!?!
NICE TRY, ROGUE, BUT MADELYNE HAD YOU TAGGED THE WHOLE WAY IN.
DARN DARN DARN!
HE HIT ME WITH A LOWEST INTENSITY PLASMA BURST--
--NOT ENOUGH TO HURT, BUT IT STINGS LIKE THE DEVIL.
POOR DEAR--
Oh, NO!
--DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE--
--YOU CAN ESCAPE A TELEPATH?
PSYLOCKE'S USING HER PSI-POWERS TO DISORIENT ROGUE...
...SO SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHICH IS THE RIGHT WAY TO GO.
ROGUE'S PUTTING UP A HECKUVA FIGHT, THOUGH. ONE ON ONE, SHE MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE.
BUT THIS TIME...
...SHE'S OUT-NUMBERED...
...AND OUT-GUNNED!
ZAP!


AYAIEOWW!
FORGIVE ME, ROGUE.
DAZZLER--
--HER SOLID LIGHT PHOTON BLAST--
--KNOCKING ME INTO COLOSSUS' ARMS!
I HOPE THIS DOES NOT HURT...
...TOO MUCH.
FWHAM!
BIG GUY'S GOT LEVERAGE--
--CAN'T WRENCH LOOSE--
SNIKT!
--WHEN'D PETEY GET SO STRONG--
--oh, geez!
GAME'S OVER, DARLIN!
WOLVERINE, NO!
YOU LOSE.
AN' IF I "POP" MY CENTER CLAW...
...YOU DEAD.
ANY COMMENTS?
NOTHIN' PRINTABLE.
NICE WORK, MADELYNE. FINEST KIND.
PRAISE INDEED, WOLVERINE. I THANK YOU.
FANTASTIC!
THE SYSTEMS ALL WORKED PERFECTLY, AND SO DID I!
FINALLY, I'M CONTRIBUTING TO THE TEAM, PULLING MY OWN WEIGHT. NICE TO DISCOVER, AT LONG LAST, THAT I STILL HAVE WORTH--TO THE X-MEN AS MUCH AS TO MYSELF.
THE MARAUDERS MAY HAVE STOLEN MY BABY, BUT BY HEAVEN--NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES OR WHAT IT COSTS-- I MEAN TO GET HIM BACK.
AND MAKE THE SWINE WHO STOLE HIM PAY!
A HEARTFELT PROMISE. A PITY MADELYNE PRYOR DOESN'T REMEMBER THAT ONE SHOULD ALWAYS BE CAREFUL WHAT ONE WISHES FOR...
BUT THAT'S A STORY FOR ANOTHER DAY...


IN THE MEANWHILE...
HOW'D WE DO, STORM?
REAL RAD, huh?
QUITE A COMPETENT PERFORMANCE, ALISON...
...FROM YOU ALL.
ONE O' THESE DAYS, SHORT-STUFF...
MAYBE SO, SWEETHEART --BUT TILL THEN...
...YOU BUY THE BEER.
...IT'S GONNA BE YOUR BUTT IN THE DIRT.
WOLVERINE--THIS WAS A TEST FOR THE ENTIRE TEAM...
"...WHERE IS LONGSHOT?!"
HULLO?
IS ANYONE HERE?!
WHY DO YOU KEEP CALLING OUT TO ME?!!
WHY--WHERE--ARE YOU HIDING?!?
I SHOULD HAVE TOLD THE OTHERS.
BUT THE VOICES SOUNDED SO LONELY AND SCARED.
I DIDN'T WANT TO FRIGHTEN THEM MORE.
COULD THE REAVERS HAVE KEPT OTHER PRISONERS...
...WE SOMEHOW MISSED WHEN WE SEARCHED THE TOWN?
THE ANSWER'S BEHIND THIS DOOR...
SOARING SPITFIRES!?!

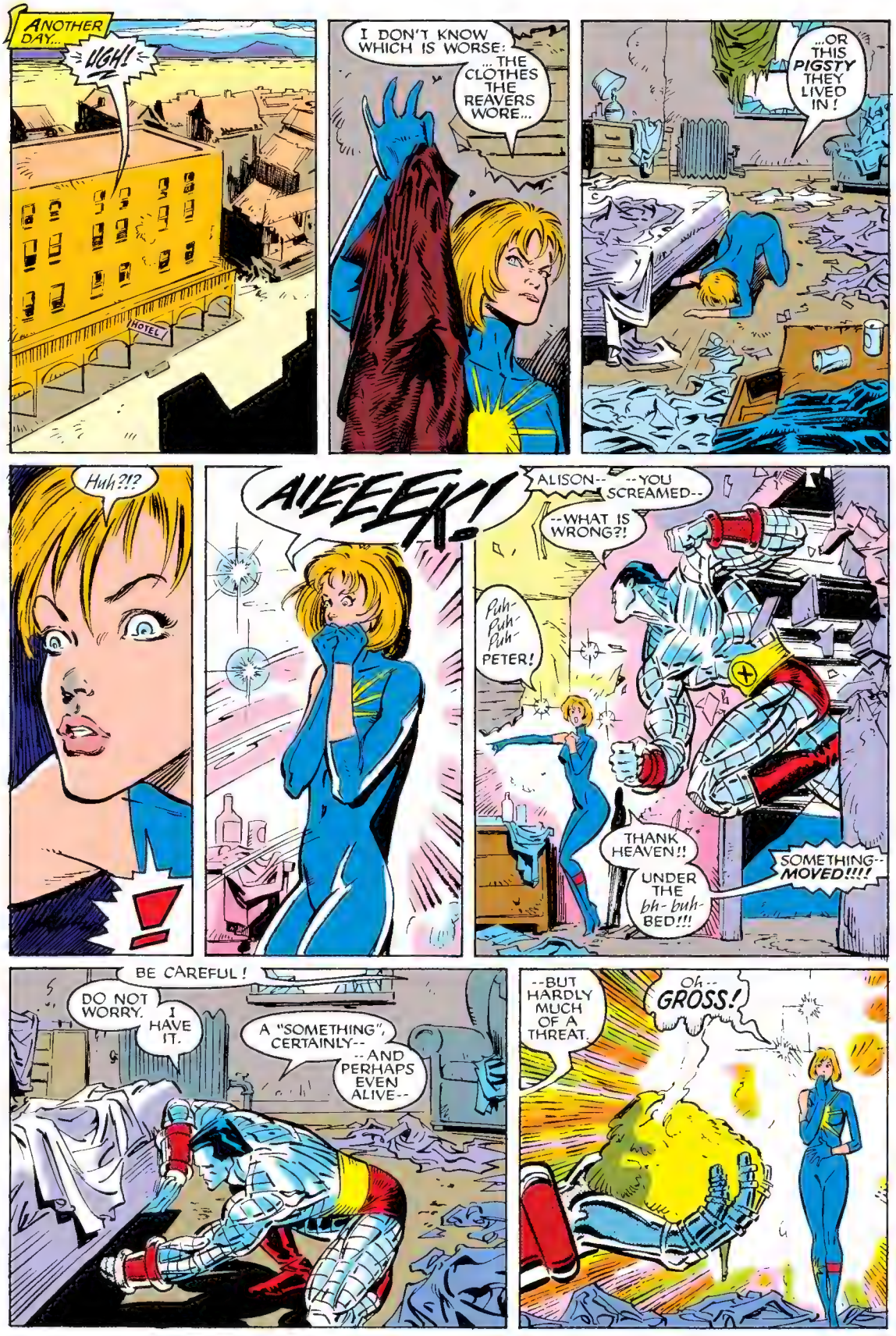
ITS' THE REAVERS' TREASURE CAVE!
HEAR US!
HELP US!
SAVE US!
SO LOST ARE WE!
SO LONELY!
STOLEN WE WERE
FROM THOSE WHO LOVED US
HERE, WE DO NOT BELONG
PLEASE
WE PLEAD
WE BEG
TAKE US HOME!

SPIRIT-VOICES--
--THINNER THAN THE FAINTEST BREEZE!
I'M LONGSHOT!
DON'T BE AFRAID.
I MEAN NO HARM.
I'D LIKE TO BE YOUR FRIEND.

AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HEAR?
BUT, WHY?
WHAT MAKES ME SO SPECIAL?!

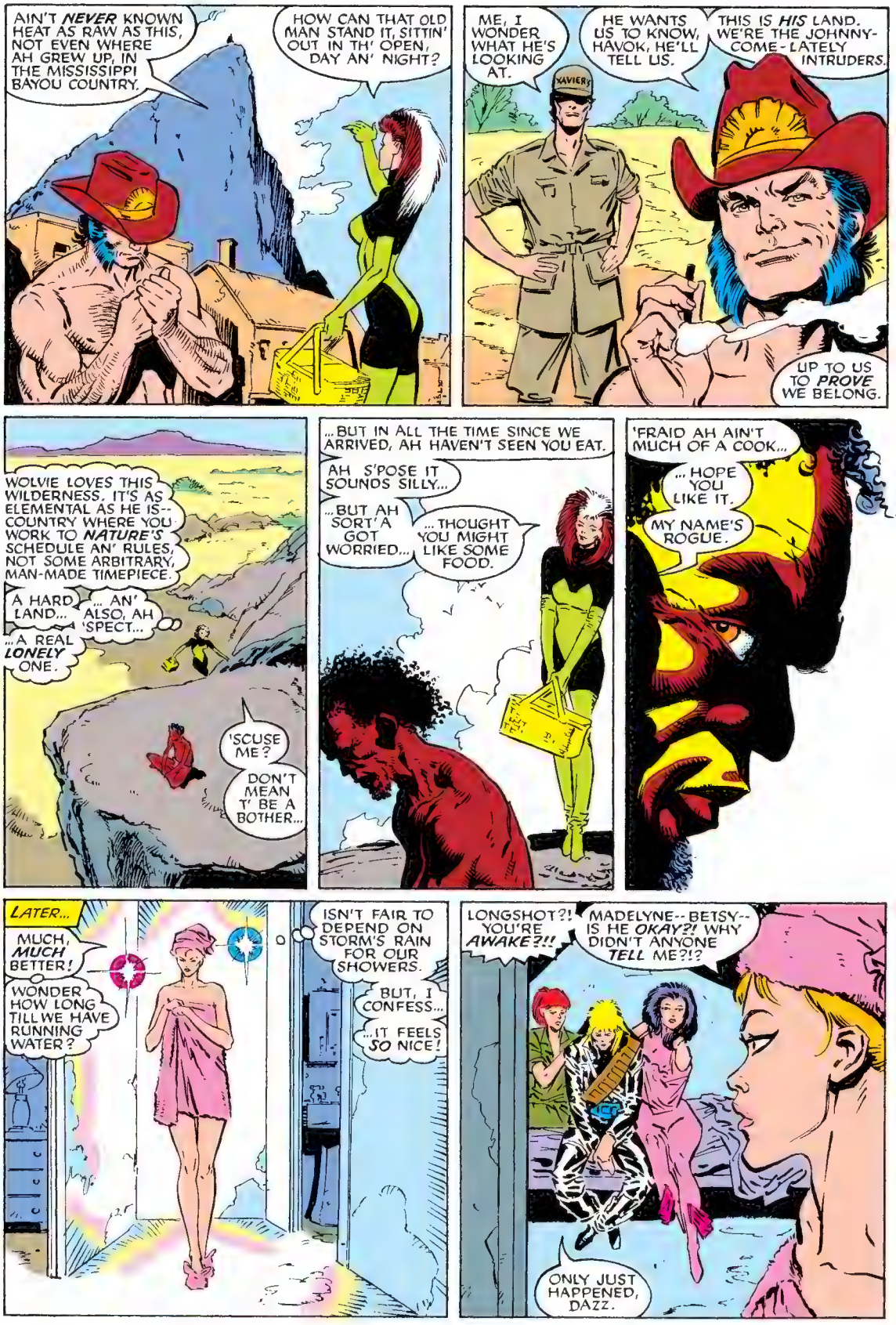
WHEN I TOUCH THINGS...
...SOMETIMES I "FEEL" IMAGES FROM THEM--
--PSYLOCKE CALLS IT, PSYCHOMETRY--
--PERHAPS BY READING THE HISTORY IN THIS ROOM...
...I'LL FIND AN ANSWER.
WITH HIS OWN HANDS, HE MADE ME...

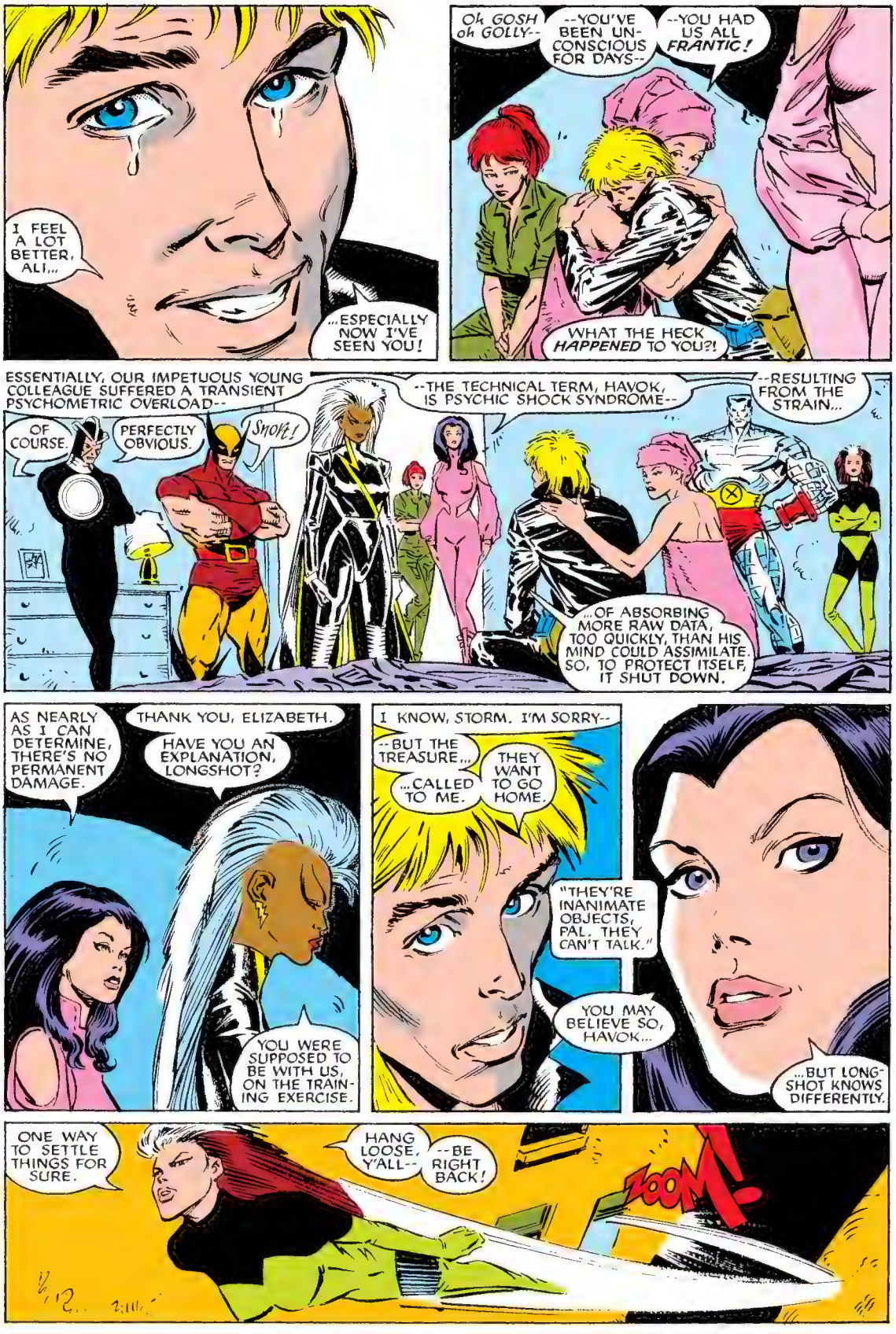
...SHAPING ME FROM RAW METAL...
...INTO A THING OF BEAUTY...
...A GIFT FOR HER, WHOM HE LOVED BEST IN ALL THE WORLD--
--YET I WAS TORN CRUELLY FROM HER...
...TURNING JOY TO HEART-BREAK...
...TAINTING THAT LOVE WITH DESO-LATION--
--WOE, oh WOE...
... I WAS ALL THAT REMAINED...
...TO REMIND HER OF THE BEAUTY THAT ONCE WAS...
... WHY AM I NOT WITH HER?
STOP IT--
--PLEASE--
--NO MORE--
--I'M NOT TO BLAME--
--WHY ARE YOU TORMENTING ME?!
THE VOICES--
--SO LONELY...
--SO DESPERATE--
...AWARE ONLY THAT THEY'RE PRISONERS, POOR THINGS.
AND MY POWER...
...IT'S ACTING LIKE A LIGHT IN THEIR DARKNESS...
...DRAWING THEM TO ME--
--AS THEIR PSYCHIC CRIES BROUGHT ME TO THEM--
--THEY MUST SEE ME...
... AS THEIR LAST HOPE!
BUT SO MANY VOICES--
--SO GREAT A NEED--
--PLEASE, YOU'RE HURTING--
--IT'S MORE THAN I CAN BEAR!!

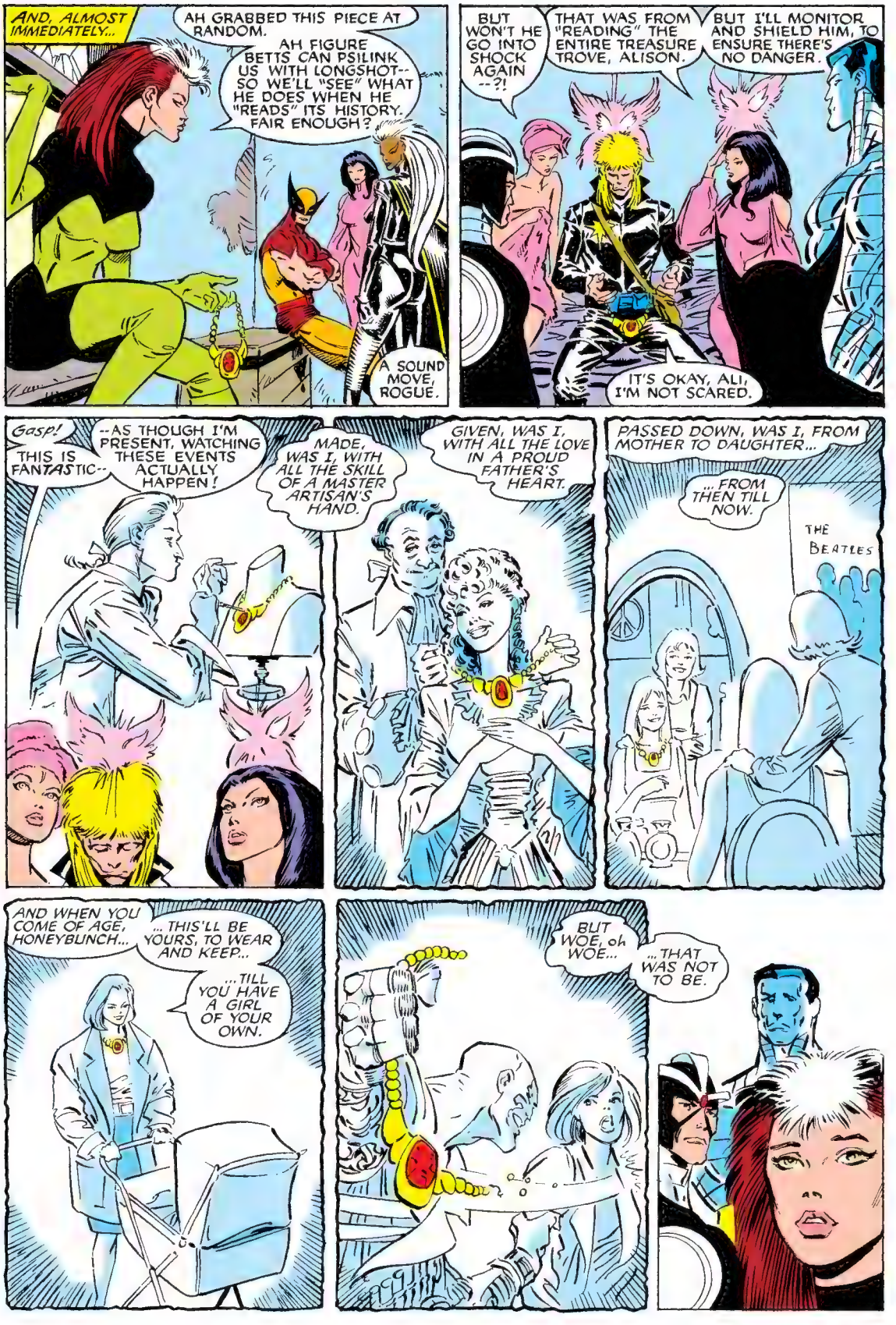

ANOTHER DAY...
UGH!
HOTEL
I DON'T KNOW WHICH IS WORSE:
... THE CLOTHES THE REAVERS WORE...
...OR THIS PIGSTY THEY LIVED IN!
Huh?!?
!
AIEEEK!
ALISON--
--YOU SCREAMED--
--WHAT IS WRONG?!
Puh-Puh-Puh-
PETER!
THANK HEAVEN!!
UNDER THE bh-buh- BED!!!
SOMETHING-- MOVED!!!!
BE CAREFUL!
DO NOT WORRY. I HAVE IT.
A "SOMETHING", CERTAINLY--
--AND PERHAPS EVEN ALIVE--
--BUT HARDLY MUCH OF A THREAT.
Oh-- GROSS!

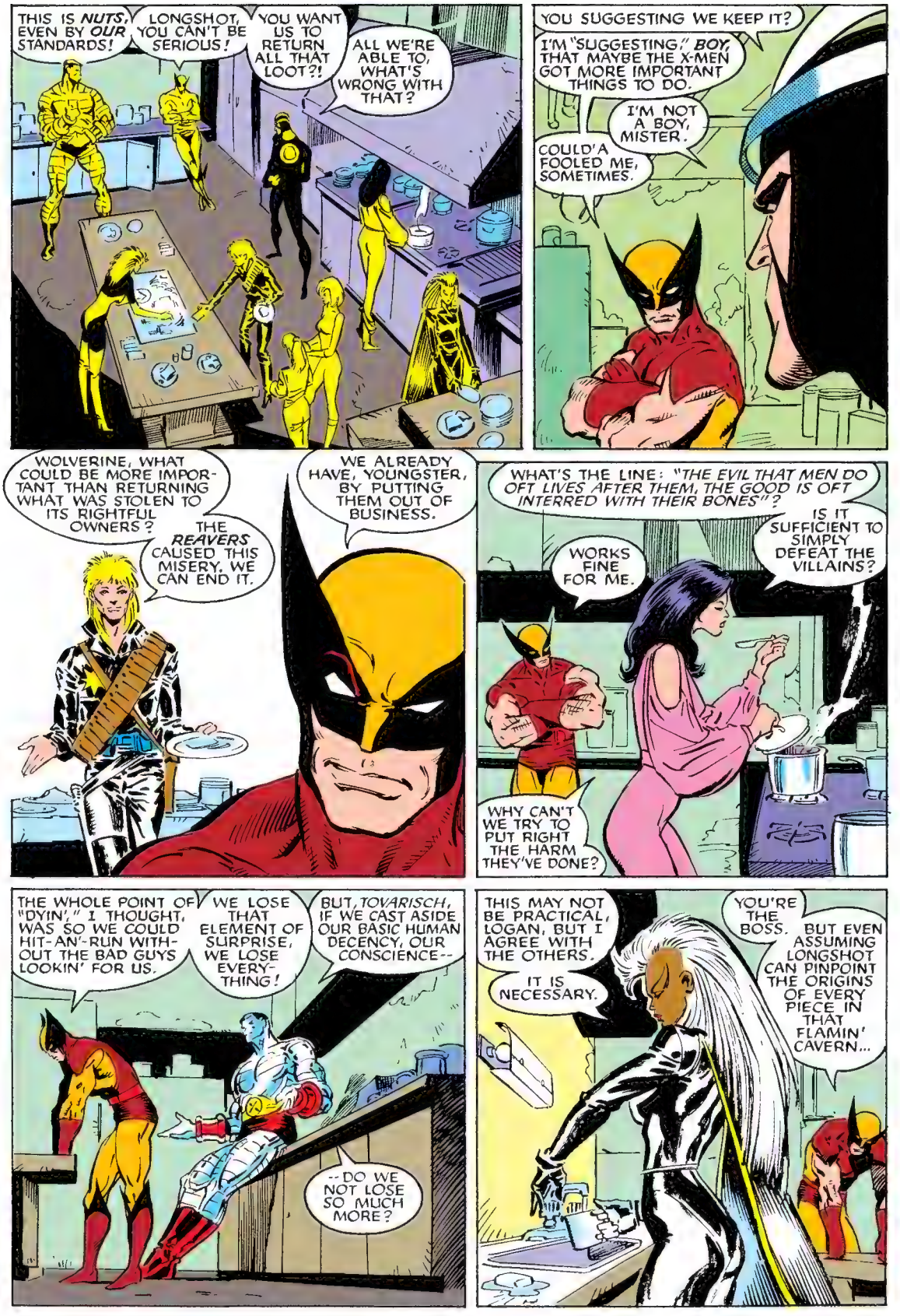
THAT'S IT!
I HATE THIS!!
STUCK IN THE MIDDLE OF ABSOLUTE NO-WHERE, IN THIS UTTER AND COMPLETE DUMP WITH NO BOOKS TO READ, TV TO WATCH, MUSIC TO LISTEN TO, AND WORST OF ALL, NO PLACE WHATSOEVER TO BOOGIE ON SATURDAY NIGHT!
THIS IS THE END, D'YOU HEAR? I'M THROUGH, I'M DONE, I'VE HAD ENOUGH!!
IF THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LEGEND...
...I WISH I'D STAYED DEAD!!!
THAT IS SOME PRIMA DONNA DISPLAY.
THE GIRL COPS ONE INCREDIBLE ATTITUDE!
GIVE HER A BREAK, BOY.
SONG-BIRD HAS A POINT.
THIS PLACE IS A DUMP.
AND THE REAVERS, PIGS.
WHICHEVER, WOLVERINE...
...WE HAVE BETTER THINGS TO DO...
...THAN SPEND THE REST OF OUR LIVES...
...MAKING OUR NEW HOME HABITABLE.
WOLVIE, WHAT'S STORM DOING?
A LITTLE SPRING CLEANING.
WHAT'S IT LOOK LIKE?

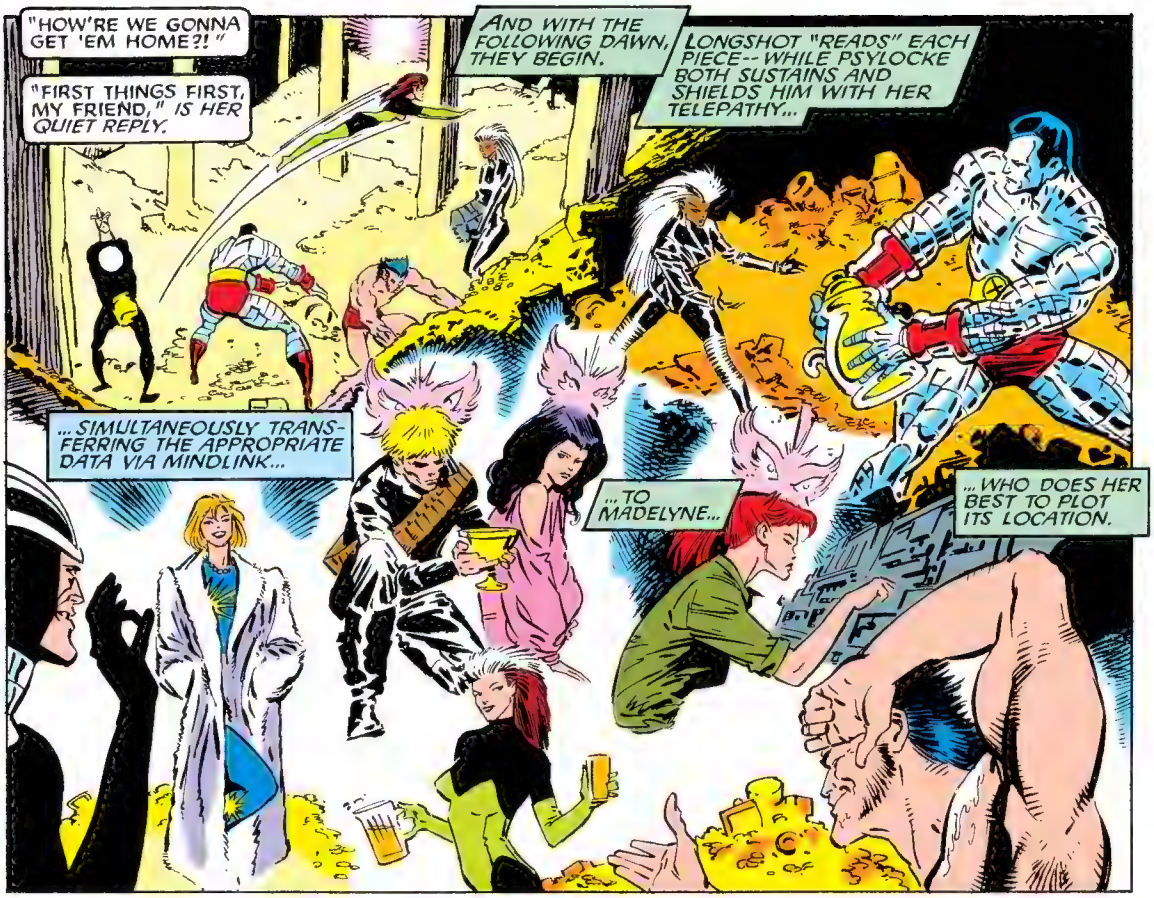
FIRST COMES A GALE FORCE WIND, TO SWEEP AWAY EVERYTHING NOT NAILED DOWN--
--YET UNDER SUCH SUPERNALLY PRECISE CONTROL THAT THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE BUILDING IS NOT DAMAGED--
--FOLLOWED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY BY A MONSOON FLOOD...
...THAT SCOURS ROOMS AND HALLWAYS TO THE BARE WOOD...
HOLD ON, ALISON...
...WHILE I CARRY US BOTH TO SAFETY!
BETTER TO HAVE LET ME DROWN, PETEY.
I FEEL SO SLIMY.
PROBABLY SMELL WORSE.
ONCE YOU WASH YOUR COSTUME...
Uh-uh. ME, I'LL WASH.
THESE RAGS GET BURNED!
ANYTHING IN THIS PILE ANYBODY WANTS?
ANYONE OBJECT TO MY DOING THE HONORS?
SAY GOODBYE, THEN...
SKZAP!
... TO ALL THAT TRASH!
AS HAVOK'S PLASMA BEAM REDUCES THE REAVERS' LEAVINGS TO THEIR COMPONENT ATOMS, AN ENIGMATIC FIGURE...
...WATCHES IMPASSIVELY FROM HIS PERCH ATOP THE ROCKY MOUND OVERLOOKING THE TOWN.
HE HAS A NAME, BUT NONE SAVE HIM KNOW IT--
--SO THE X-MEN USE THE ONE THE REAVERS GAVE HIM: GATEWAY.


AIN'T NEVER KNOWN HEAT AS RAW AS THIS, NOT EVEN WHERE AH GREW UP, IN THE MISSISSIPPI BAYOU COUNTRY.
HOW CAN THAT OLD MAN STAND IT, SITTIN' OUT IN TH' OPEN, DAY AN' NIGHT?
ME, I WONDER WHAT HE'S LOOKING AT.
HE WANTS US TO KNOW, HAVOK, HE'LL TELL US.
THIS IS HIS LAND. WE'RE THE JOHNNY-COME-LATELY INTRUDERS.
XAVIER'S
UP TO US TO PROVE WE BELONG.
WOLVIE LOVES THIS WILDERNESS. IT'S AS ELEMENTAL AS HE IS--COUNTRY WHERE YOU WORK TO NATURE'S SCHEDULE AN' RULES, NOT SOME ARBITRARY, MAN-MADE TIMEPIECE.
A HARD LAND...
... AN' ALSO, AH 'SPECT...
...A REAL LONELY ONE.
'SCUSE ME?
DON'T MEAN T' BE A BOTHER...
...BUT IN ALL THE TIME SINCE WE ARRIVED, AH HAVEN'T SEEN YOU EAT.
AH S'POSE IT SOUNDS SILLY...
...BUT AH SORT'A GOT WORRIED...
...THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE SOME FOOD.
'FRAID AH AIN'T MUCH OF A COOK...
... HOPE YOU LIKE IT.
MY NAME'S ROGUE.
LATER...
MUCH, MUCH BETTER!
WONDER HOW LONG TILL WE HAVE RUNNING WATER?
ISN'T FAIR TO DEPEND ON STORM'S RAIN FOR OUR SHOWERS.
BUT, I CONFESS...
...IT FEELS SO NICE!
LONGSHOT?! YOU'RE AWAKE?!!
MADELYNE--BETSY--IS HE OKAY?! WHY DIDN'T ANYONE TELL ME?!?
ONLY JUST HAPPENED, DAZZ.

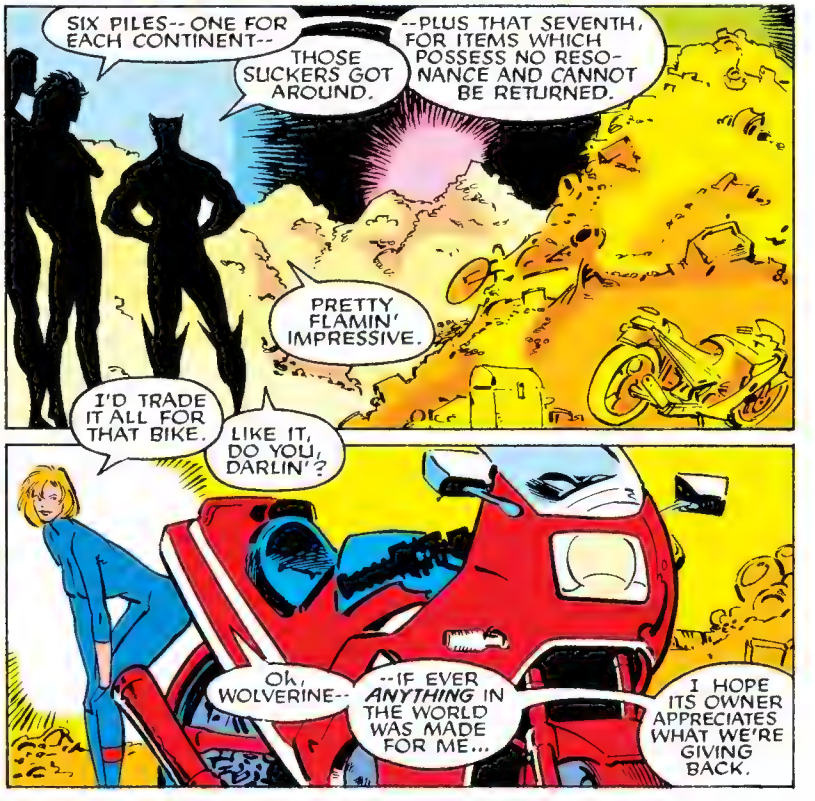

I FEEL A LOT BETTER, ALI...
...ESPECIALLY NOW I'VE SEEN YOU!
Oh GOSH oh GOLLY--
--YOU'VE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS FOR DAYS--
--YOU HAD US ALL FRANTIC!
WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED TO YOU?!
ESSENTIALLY, OUR IMPETUOUS YOUNG COLLEAGUE SUFFERED A TRANSIENT PSYCHOMETRIC OVERLOAD--
--THE TECHNICAL TERM, HAVOK, IS PSYCHIC SHOCK SYNDROME--
--RESULTING FROM THE STRAIN...
OF COURSE.
PERFECTLY OBVIOUS.
Snort!
...OF ABSORBING MORE RAW DATA, TOO QUICKLY, THAN HIS MIND COULD ASSIMILATE. SO, TO PROTECT ITSELF, IT SHUT DOWN.
AS NEARLY AS I CAN DETERMINE, THERE'S NO PERMANENT DAMAGE.
THANK YOU, ELIZABETH.
HAVE YOU AN EXPLANATION, LONGSHOT?
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE WITH US, ON THE TRAINING EXERCISE.
I KNOW, STORM. I'M SORRY--
--BUT THE TREASURE...
...CALLED TO ME.
THEY WANT TO GO HOME.
"THEY'RE INANIMATE OBJECTS, PAL. THEY CAN'T TALK."
YOU MAY BELIEVE SO, HAVOK...
...BUT LONGSHOT KNOWS DIFFERENTLY.
ONE WAY TO SETTLE THINGS FOR SURE.
HANG LOOSE, Y'ALL--
--BE RIGHT BACK!
ZOOM!


AND, ALMOST IMMEDIATELY...
AH GRABBED THIS PIECE AT RANDOM.
AH FIGURE BETTS CAN PSILINK US WITH LONGSHOT-- SO WE'LL "SEE" WHAT HE DOES WHEN HE "READS" ITS HISTORY. FAIR ENOUGH?
A SOUND MOVE, ROGUE.
BUT WON'T HE GO INTO SHOCK AGAIN --?!
THAT WAS FROM "READING" THE ENTIRE TREASURE TROVE, ALISON.
BUT I'LL MONITOR AND SHIELD HIM, TO ENSURE THERE'S NO DANGER.
IT'S OKAY, ALI, I'M NOT SCARED.
Gasp! THIS IS FANTASTIC--
--AS THOUGH I'M PRESENT, WATCHING THESE EVENTS ACTUALLY HAPPEN!
MADE, WAS I, WITH ALL THE SKILL OF A MASTER ARTISAN'S HAND.
GIVEN, WAS I, WITH ALL THE LOVE IN A PROUD FATHER'S HEART.
PASSED DOWN, WAS I, FROM MOTHER TO DAUGHTER...
... FROM THEN TILL NOW.
THE BEATLES
AND WHEN YOU COME OF AGE, HONEYBUNCH...
... THIS'LL BE YOURS, TO WEAR AND KEEP...
... TILL YOU HAVE A GIRL OF YOUR OWN.
BUT WOE, oh WOE...
... THAT WAS NOT TO BE.

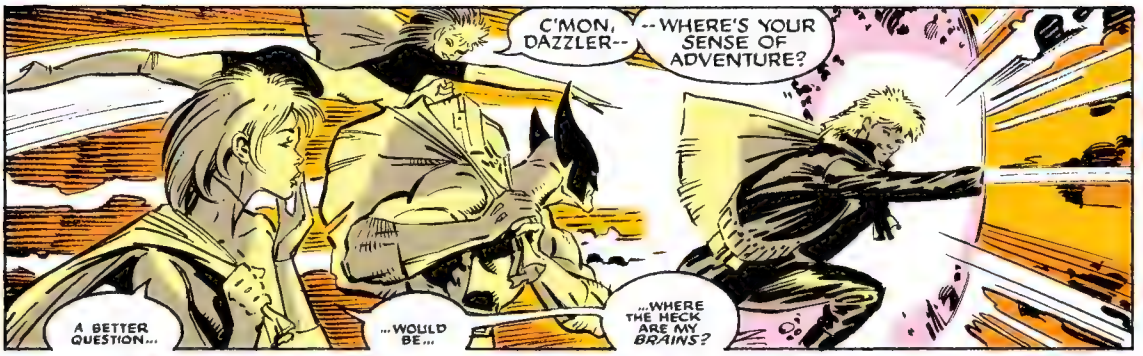

THIS IS NUTS, EVEN BY OUR STANDARDS!
LONGSHOT, YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS!
YOU WANT US TO RETURN ALL THAT LOOT?!
ALL WE'RE ABLE TO, WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
YOU SUGGESTING WE KEEP IT?
I'M "SUGGESTING," BOY, THAT MAYBE THE X-MEN GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO.
I'M NOT A BOY, MISTER.
COULD'A FOOLED ME, SOMETIMES.
WOLVERINE, WHAT COULD BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN RETURNING WHAT WAS STOLEN TO ITS RIGHTFUL OWNERS?
THE REAVERS CAUSED THIS MISERY. WE CAN END IT.
WE ALREADY HAVE, YOUNGSTER, BY PUTTING THEM OUT OF BUSINESS.
WHAT'S THE LINE: "THE EVIL THAT MEN DO OFT LIVES AFTER THEM, THE GOOD IS OFT INTERRED WITH THEIR BONES"?
IS IT SUFFICIENT TO SIMPLY DEFEAT THE VILLAINS?
WORKS FINE FOR ME.
WHY CAN'T WE TRY TO PUT RIGHT THE HARM THEY'VE DONE?
THE WHOLE POINT OF "DYIN'," I THOUGHT, WAS SO WE COULD HIT-AN'-RUN WITHOUT THE BAD GUYS LOOKIN' FOR US.
WE LOSE THAT ELEMENT OF SURPRISE, WE LOSE EVERYTHING!
BUT, TOVARISCH, IF WE CAST ASIDE OUR BASIC HUMAN DECENCY, OUR CONSCIENCE--
--DO WE NOT LOSE SO MUCH MORE?
THIS MAY NOT BE PRACTICAL, LOGAN, BUT I AGREE WITH THE OTHERS.
IT IS NECESSARY.
YOU'RE THE BOSS. BUT EVEN ASSUMING LONGSHOT CAN PINPOINT THE ORIGINS OF EVERY PIECE IN THAT FLAMIN' CAVERN...

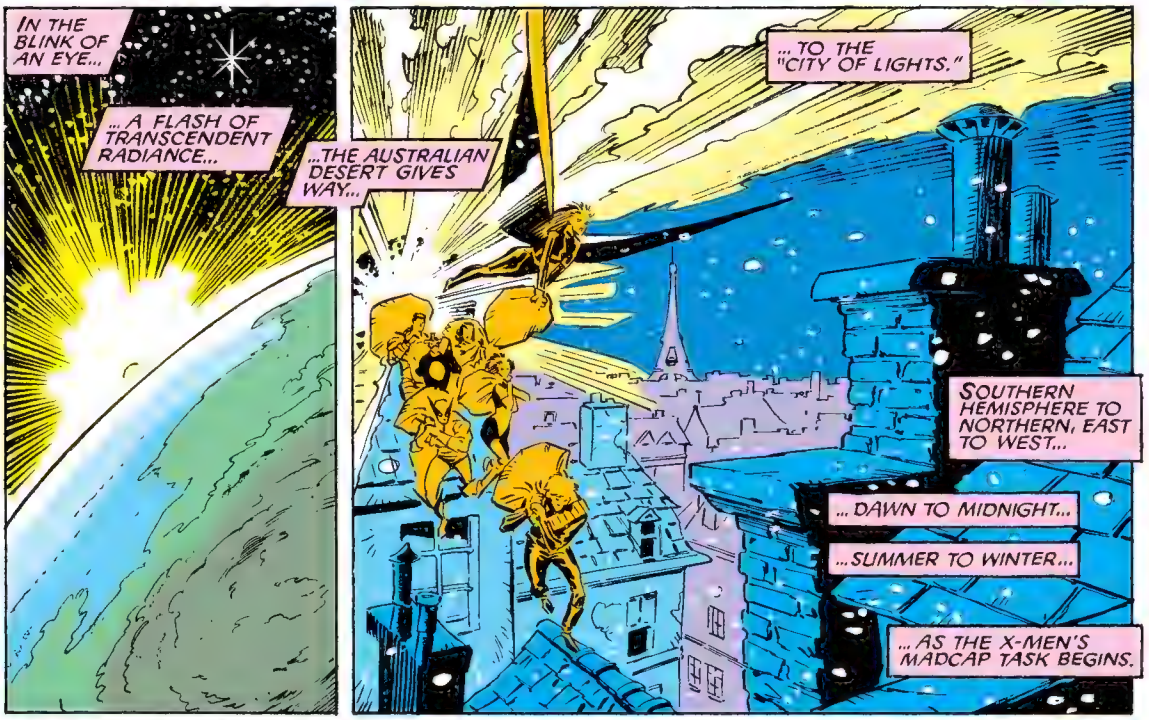

"HOW'RE WE GONNA GET 'EM HOME?!"
"FIRST THINGS FIRST, MY FRIEND," IS HER QUIET REPLY.
AND WITH THE FOLLOWING DAWN, THEY BEGIN.
LONGSHOT "READS" EACH PIECE-- WHILE PSYLOCKE BOTH SUSTAINS AND SHIELDS HIM WITH HER TELEPATHY...
...SIMULTANEOUSLY TRANSFERRING THE APPROPRIATE DATA VIA MINDLINK...
...TO MADELYNE...
...WHO DOES HER BEST TO PLOT ITS LOCATION.

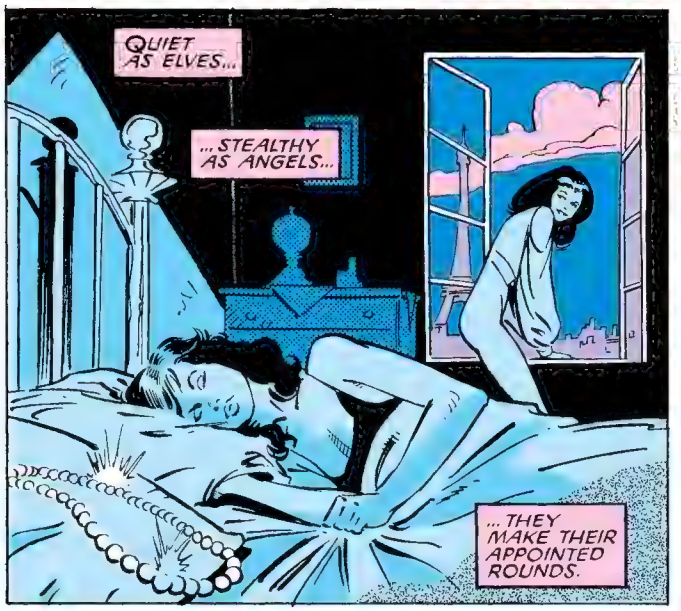
IT'S A LONG, HARD, WEARING PROCESS-- THE ENTIRE TEAM STAGGERED BY THE AMOUNT OF TREASURE THE REAVERS HAD AMASSED--
--BUT, EVENTUALLY...


SIX PILES-- ONE FOR EACH CONTINENT--
THOSE SUCKERS GOT AROUND.
--PLUS THAT SEVENTH, FOR ITEMS WHICH POSSESS NO RESONANCE AND CANNOT BE RETURNED.
PRETTY FLAMIN' IMPRESSIVE.
I'D TRADE IT ALL FOR THAT BIKE.
LIKE IT, DO YOU, DARLIN'?
OH, WOLVERINE--
--IF EVER ANYTHING IN THE WORLD WAS MADE FOR ME...
I HOPE ITS OWNER APPRECIATES WHAT WE'RE GIVING BACK.

Y'KNOW, PEOPLE--
--ALL THIS WORK WON'T MEAN SPIT...
...WITHOUT GATEWAY'S HELP.
HEY, IF ANY-BODY ELSE WANTS TO TRY, THEY'RE WELCOME.
ME, AH'VE TALKED AT HIM TILL AH RAN OUTTA WORDS--
--AN' AH DIDN'T THINK THAT WAS POSSIBLE--
--HE JUST LOOKS AN' LISTENS.
DUNNO IF HE UNDERSTOOD.
AIN'T GOT A CLUE WHAT HE'S FEELIN'.
AT WHICH POINT...
YAIOWHH!
GATEWAY'S BONFIRE--
--IT'S ALIGHT!
BLESS YOUR HEART, YOU DARLIN', YOU!
AH KNEW YOU'D COME THROUGH FOR US!!
BUT HOW'S HE GOING TO KNOW WHERE TO SEND US?
I SHALL TELL HIM, HAVOK...
...TELE-PATHICALLY.
Y'KNOW-- WE'RE PUTTING OUR LIVES IN HIS HANDS-
--HOW DO WE KNOW WE CAN TRUST HIM?
BECAUSE, ALISON, WHAT WE'RE DOING IS RIGHT.
AH GOT NOTHIN' RATIONAL TO BASE THIS ON--
--ONLY MY INSTINCTS...
...AN' THE LOOK IN HIS EYE--
--BUT AH SAY, GO FOR IT!


C'MON, DAZZLER--
--WHERE'S YOUR SENSE OF ADVENTURE?
A BETTER QUESTION...
...WOULD BE...
...WHERE THE HECK ARE MY BRAINS?

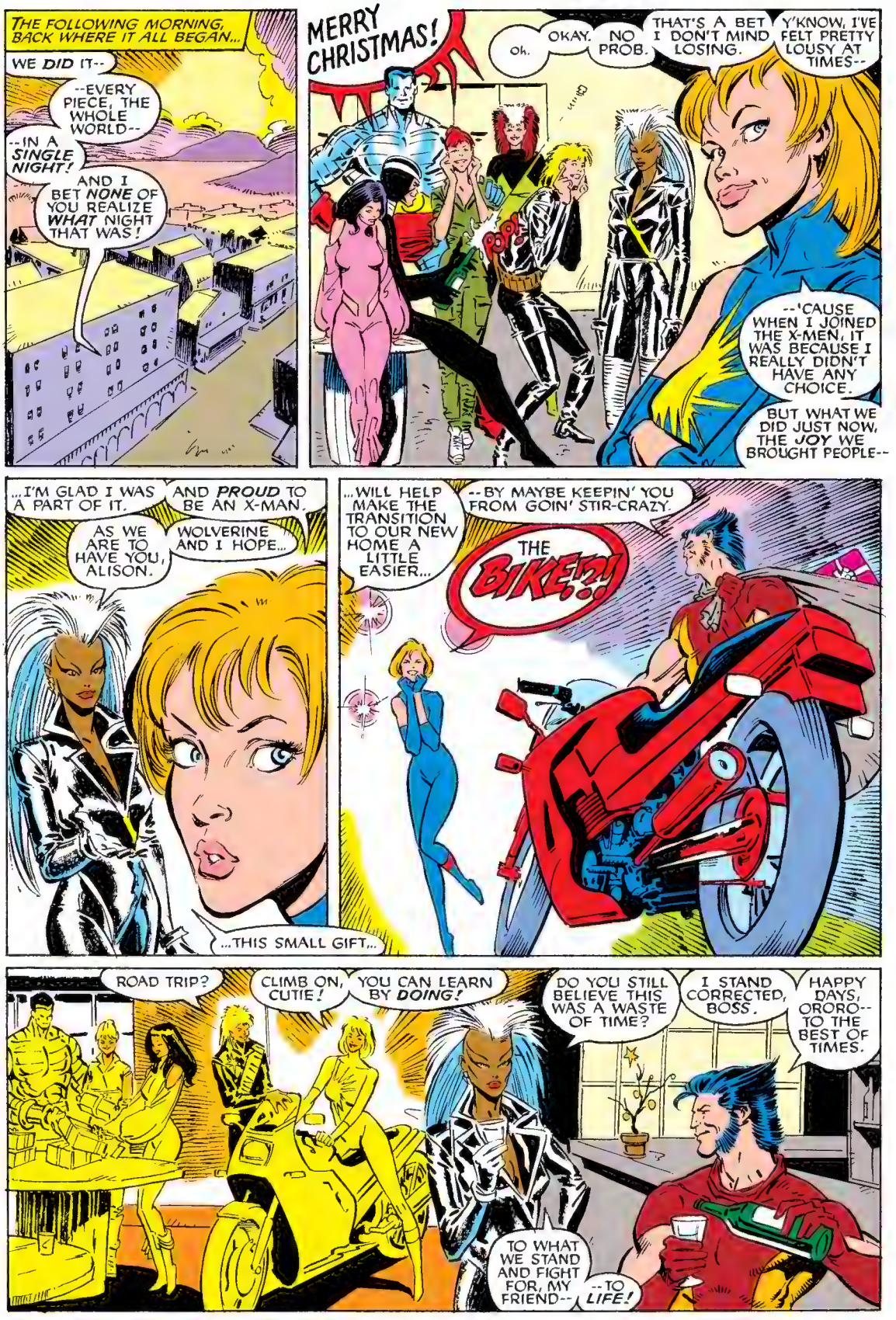

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE...
...A FLASH OF TRANSCENDENT RADIANCE...
...THE AUSTRALIAN DESERT GIVES WAY...
...TO THE "CITY OF LIGHTS."
SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE TO NORTHERN, EAST TO WEST...
...DAWN TO MIDNIGHT...
...SUMMER TO WINTER...
...AS THE X-MEN'S MADCAP TASK BEGINS.


QUIET AS ELVES...
...STEALTHY AS ANGELS...
...THEY MAKE THEIR APPOINTED ROUNDS.

CORBY, NORTHANTS, ENGLAND.
I TELL YOU...
...I HEARD A NOISE...
...SOMEONE'S DOWNSTAIRS!
SILLY LITTLE BABY, I'LL SHOW YOU NOBODY'S--
--GASP!?!

IS SHE A THIEF?
NO--LOOK--SHE'S LEAVING PRESENTS!
?!?
Shshshsh!
FOLKS ARE FAST ASLEEP.
DON'T WANT TO WAKE 'EM NOW, DO WE?
CONGRATULATIONS, YOUNGSTERS--
--GUESS WHAT--
--YOU JUST GOT TO MEET ONE OF...
...SANTA'S SPECIAL HELPERS.
'BYE, NOW!
MUMMY! DADDY!! COME QUICK!!! COME SEE!!!! A MIRACLE!!!!!
SALEM CENTER, NEW YORK...
...AS THE TOWN'S COMBINED SCHOOL CHOIRS PIT THEIR VOICES...
...AGAINST A VICIOUS SNOWSQUALL.
AMONG THE SINGERS, THE SURVIVING STUDENTS OF PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL--OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE NEW MUTANTS.
I WISH WE'D NEVER COME.
YEAH--STUPID HOLIDAY.
THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A TIME OF CELEBRATION.
BUT WITH DOUG DEAD...
Christmas carols
Christmas carol
"...ALONG WITH MY BROTHER PETER AND THE X-MEN...
"...I DON'T FEEL MUCH IN THE MOOD."
POOR ILLYANA. I WISH WE COULD REVEAL THE TRUTH.
BUT BETTER THE PAIN OF THIS LIE...
...THAN THAT OF MOURNING ANOTHER SLAIN TEAMMATE.
IN THE MEAN-WHILE, I CAN AT LEAST...
"...MODERATE THE ELEMENTS, TO MAKE THIS EVENING A LITTLE PLEASANTER."
WIND'S DYIN' DOWN.
AND THE SLEET'S CHANGING TO SNOW!
WHADDYA SAY, RAHNE--
--TONIGHT OF ALL NIGHTS--
--WANT TO TRY...
...ONE MORE CAROL?

SHE'S RELUCTANT AT FIRST, THE WORDS COME HALTINGLY--
-- BUT SLOWLY, GENTLY, THE BEAUTY OF THE SONG MIXES WITH THAT OF THE MOMENT...
...TO CREATE A SPECIAL MAGIC THAT TOUCHES ALL THEIR HEARTS WITH JOY...
...AND PEACE.
HONG KONG.
BILLY MAO NEVER MET A MUTANT IN HIS LIFE.
AND HE NEVER EVEN KNEW THE X-MEN EXISTED...
WANTED: THE X-MEN
BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS
FOR CRIMES AGAINST THE
...TILL HE WATCHED THEM ON TV.
HE SAW THEM DIE.
AND, AFTERWARDS, NOTHING FOR HIM WAS QUITE THE SAME.
AS FAR AS HE'S CONCERNED, THEY'RE HEROES.
AND HE MEANS TO DO HIS BEST TO ENSURE...
...THEIR LEGEND NEVER FADES.
WANTED: THE X-MEN
BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS LEAGUE FOR CRIMES AGAINST THE RACE
BOSTON...
St. ANDREW'S HOSPITAL
ATRICS
C.C.U.
WHAT'S THIS?!
MOTHER'S NECKLACE!?!


THE FOLLOWING MORNING, BACK WHERE IT ALL BEGAN...
WE DID IT--
--EVERY PIECE, THE WHOLE WORLD--
--IN A SINGLE NIGHT!
AND I BET NONE OF YOU REALIZE WHAT NIGHT THAT WAS!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
Oh.
OKAY.
NO PROB.
THAT'S A BET I DON'T MIND LOSING.
Y'KNOW, I'VE FELT PRETTY LOUSY AT TIMES--
--'CAUSE WHEN I JOINED THE X-MEN, IT WAS BECAUSE I REALLY DIDN'T HAVE ANY CHOICE.
BUT WHAT WE DID JUST NOW, THE JOY WE BROUGHT PEOPLE--
...I'M GLAD I WAS A PART OF IT.
AND PROUD TO BE AN X-MAN.
AS WE ARE TO HAVE YOU, ALISON.
WOLVERINE AND I HOPE...
...THIS SMALL GIFT...
...WILL HELP MAKE THE TRANSITION TO OUR NEW HOME A LITTLE EASIER...
--BY MAYBE KEEPIN' YOU FROM GOIN' STIR-CRAZY.
THE BIKE?!
ROAD TRIP?
CLIMB ON, CUTIE!
YOU CAN LEARN BY DOING!
DO YOU STILL BELIEVE THIS WAS A WASTE OF TIME?
I STAND CORRECTED, BOSS.
HAPPY DAYS, ORORO-- TO THE BEST OF TIMES.
TO WHAT WE STAND AND FIGHT FOR, MY FRIEND--
--TO LIFE!

MORNIN', GATEWAY.
THIS IS CRAZY!
AH KNOW THIS ISN'T YOUR HOLIDAY OR ANYTHING.
AH MUST BE A FOOL...
DON'T EVEN KNOW IF YOU PEOPLE HAVE. HOLIDAYS.
...COMIN' UP HERE.
BUT AH DON'T THINK IT'S RIGHT YOU BEIN' LEFT OUT OF OUR CELEBRATION...
...WHEN YOU DID SO MUCH TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE.
AH BROUGHT YOU SOME CAKE.
AN' A PRESENT.
DIDN'T MUCH KNOW WHAT YOU'D LIKE...
...BUT THIS SEEMED SORT'A... RIGHT.
NONE OF US KNOWS REALLY WHERE THE X-MEN ARE GOIN'--
--OR HOW WE'LL END UP--
--BUT THANKS TO TONIGHT, THANKS TO YOU...
...AH FIGURE WE'RE OFF TO A FINEST-KIND START.
THAT'S MY PIECE, ALL SAID AN' DONE...
...AH WON'T BOTHER YOU NOMO
PAT PAT PAT
NEXT: Dressed for Dinner

MARVEL
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
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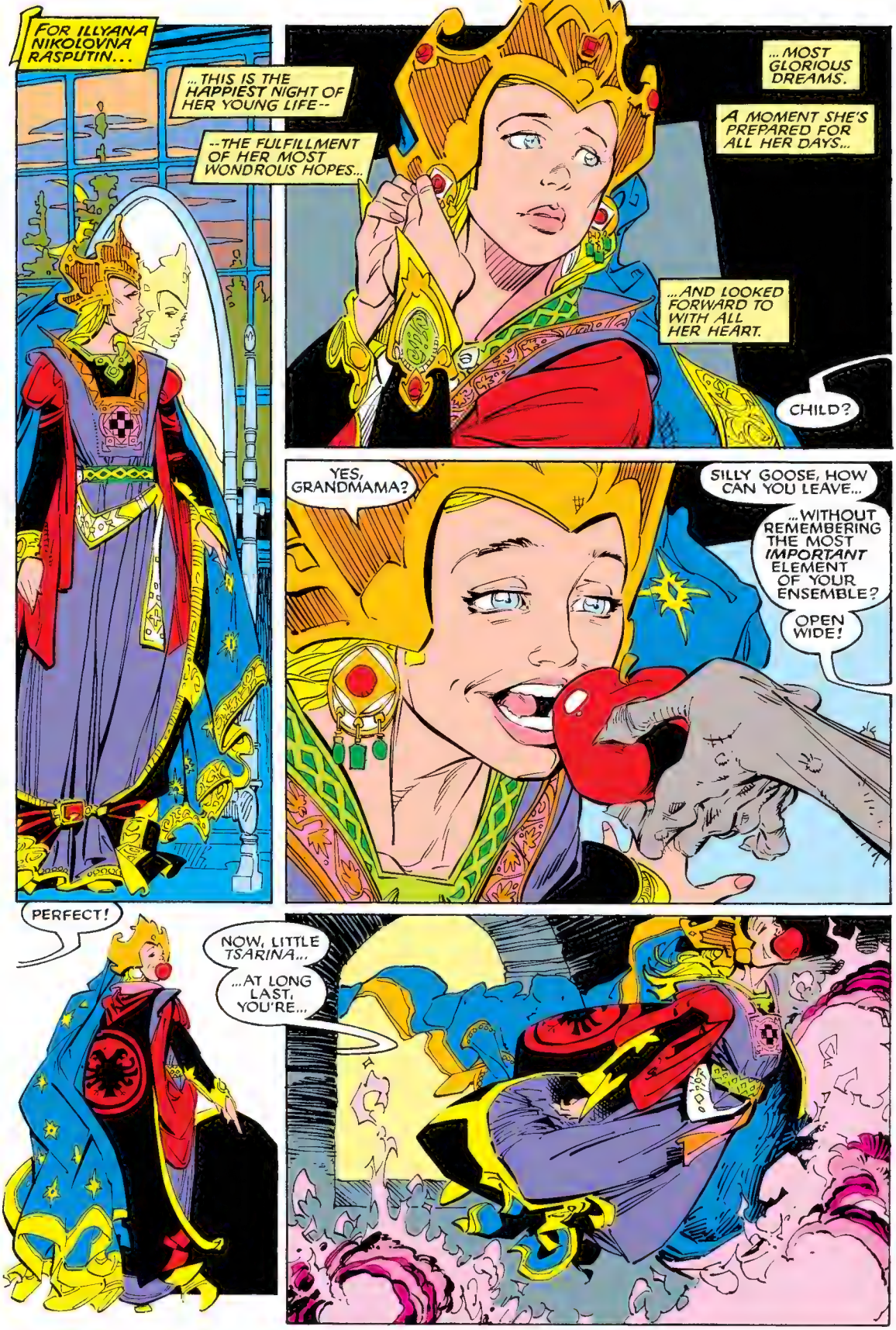
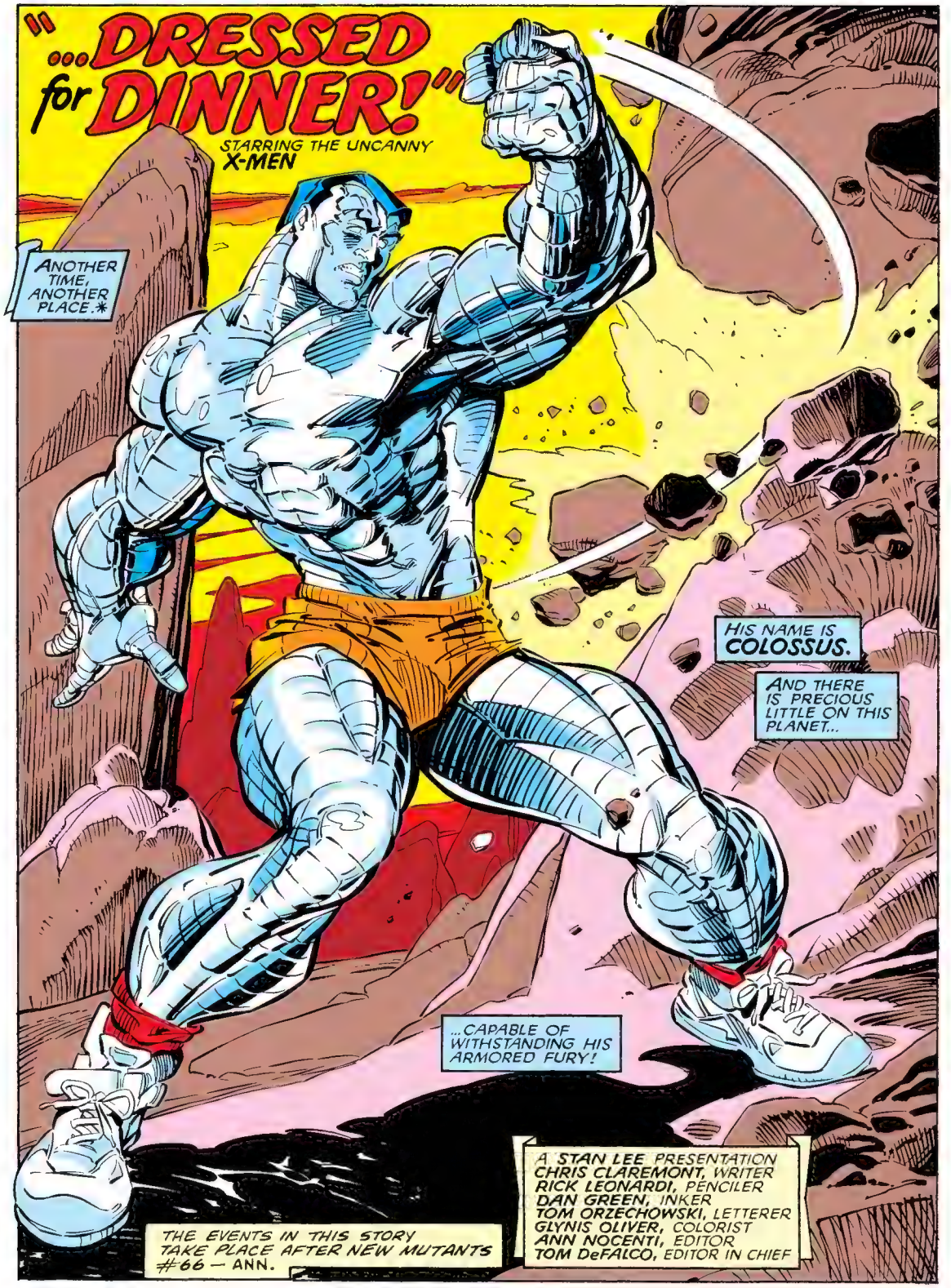
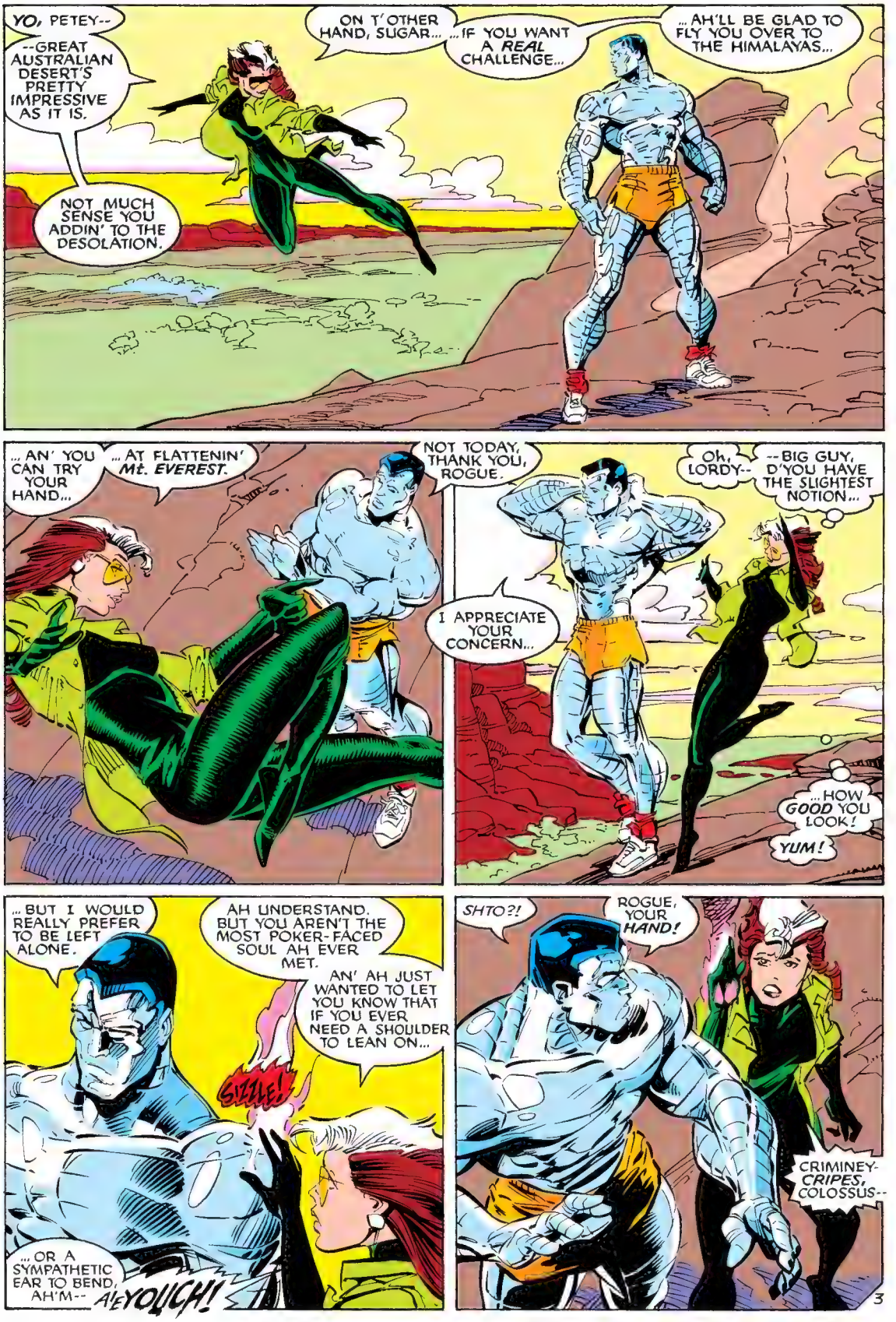

FOR ILLYANA NIKOLOVNA RASPUTIN...
...THIS IS THE HAPPIEST NIGHT OF HER YOUNG LIFE--
--THE FULFILLMENT OF HER MOST WONDROUS HOPES...
...MOST GLORIOUS DREAMS.
A MOMENT SHE'S PREPARED FOR ALL HER DAYS...
...AND LOOKED FORWARD TO WITH ALL HER HEART.
CHILD?
YES, GRANDMAMA?
SILLY GOOSE, HOW CAN YOU LEAVE...
...WITHOUT REMEMBERING THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF YOUR ENSEMBLE?
OPEN WIDE!
PERFECT!
NOW, LITTLE TSARINA...
...AT LONG LAST, YOU'RE...

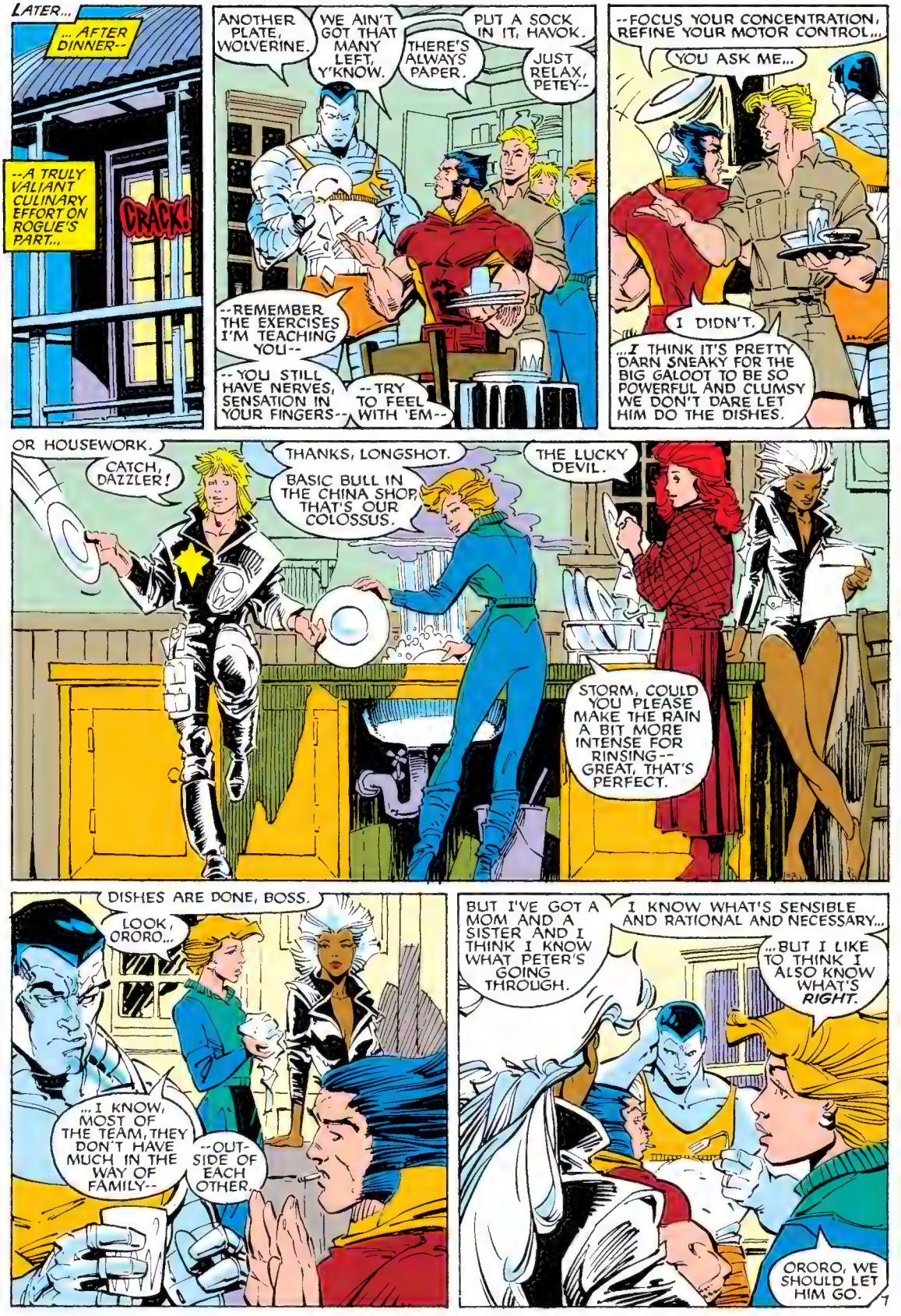

"...DRESSED for DINNER!"
STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE.*
HIS NAME IS COLOSSUS.
AND THERE IS PRECIOUS LITTLE ON THIS PLANET...
...CAPABLE OF WITHSTANDING HIS ARMORED FURY!
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION
CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER
RICK LEONARDI, PENCILER
DAN GREEN, INKER
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST
ANN NOCENTI, EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO, EDITOR IN CHIEF
THE EVENTS IN THIS STORY TAKE PLACE AFTER NEW MUTANTS #66 — ANN.


YO, PETEY--
--GREAT AUSTRALIAN DESERT'S PRETTY IMPRESSIVE AS IT IS.
NOT MUCH SENSE YOU ADDIN' TO THE DESOLATION.
ON T'OTHER HAND, SUGAR...
...IF YOU WANT A REAL CHALLENGE...
...AH'LL BE GLAD TO FLY YOU OVER TO THE HIMALAYAS...
...AN' YOU CAN TRY YOUR HAND...
...AT FLATTENIN' Mt. EVEREST.
NOT TODAY, THANK YOU, ROGUE.
I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN...
Oh, LORDY--
--BIG GUY, D'YOU HAVE THE SLIGHTEST NOTION...
...HOW GOOD YOU LOOK!
YUM!
...BUT I WOULD REALLY PREFER TO BE LEFT ALONE.
AH UNDERSTAND. BUT YOU AREN'T THE MOST POKER-FACED SOUL AH EVER MET.
AN' AH JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW THAT IF YOU EVER NEED A SHOULDER TO LEAN ON...
SIZZLE!
...OR A SYMPATHETIC EAR TO BEND, AH'M--
AIEYOUCH!
SHTO?!
ROGUE, YOUR HAND!
CRIMINEY-CRIPES, COLOSSUS--

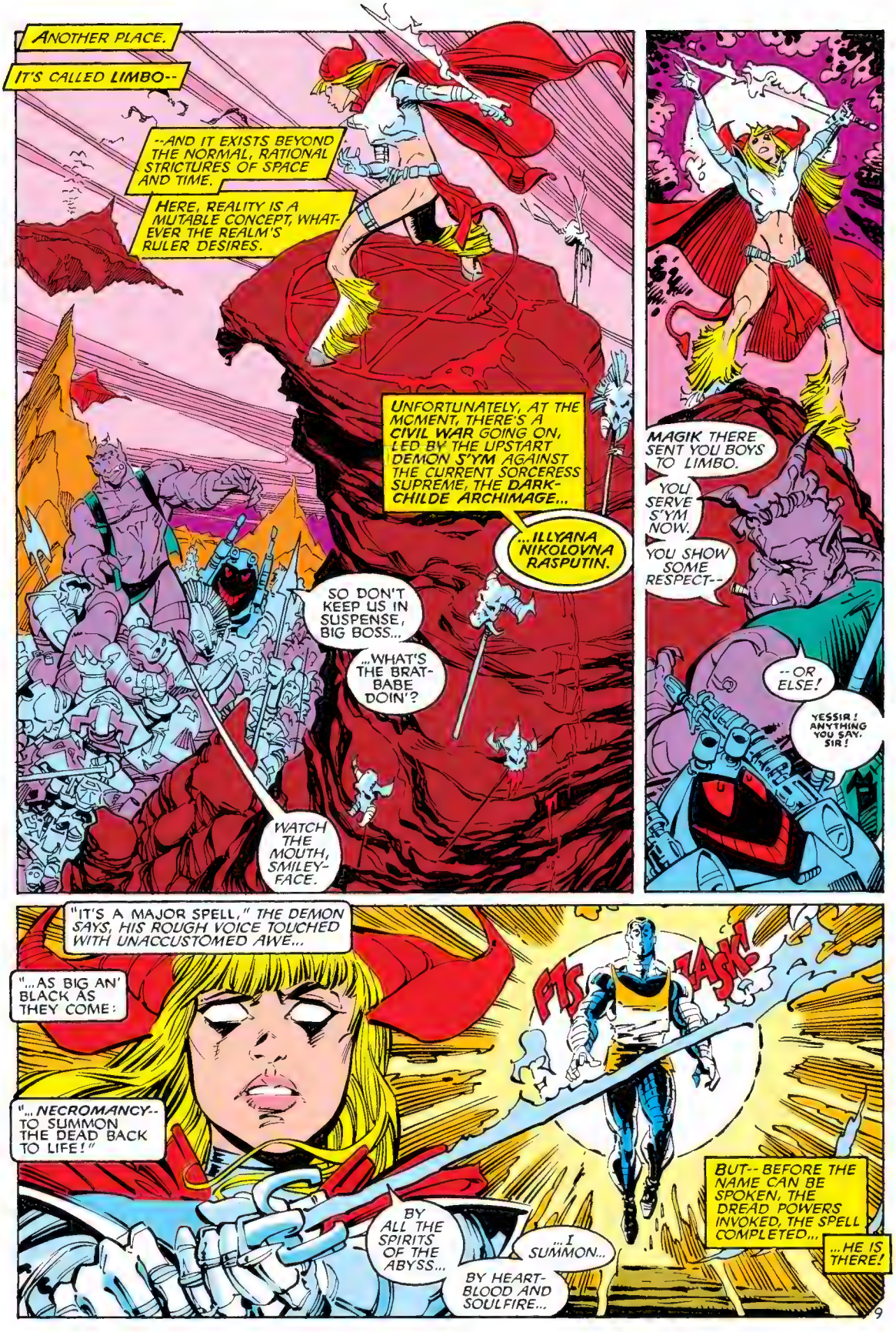
--YOU GOT ANY NOTION HOW HOT YOU ARE?!!
GOOD THING AH'M MOSTLY INVULNERABLE, ELSE AH'D HAVE BEEN BURNED!
EVEN MORE SO, IF AH HADN'T FLINCHED SO FAST, AN' OUR SKINS HAD COME INTO CONTACT...
...AH'D HAVE ABSORBED YOUR POWER AN' PSYCHE!
BETTER BE CAREFUL, BUDDY, WHEN YOU'RE IN THE SUN...
...ELSE YOU'LL SCORCH WHOEVER TOUCHES YOU.
ANOTHER DISADVANTAGE, IT APPEARS...
...OF MY INABILITY TO REVERT FROM ARMOR TO HUMAN FORM.
SO MUCH HAS CHANGED, ILLYANA--
--LITTLE SNOWFLAKE, BELOVED BABY SISTER--
--SINCE LAST I SAW-- eh ?!?
MY SKETCH-BOOK--
--NO!
FWOUMF!
THE HEAT OF MY HANDS--
--NO--
--SET IT ALIGHT--
--NO--
--I CANNOT PUT IT OUT!
NO!
WITH ALL HIS AWESOME STRENGTH, PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH RASPUTIN TRIES TO TRIGGER HIS MUTANT TRANSFORMATION.
BUT, AS SO OFTEN HAPPENS THESE DAYS...
...HE FAILS.
DO YOU MOCK ME, COMRADE GATEWAY...

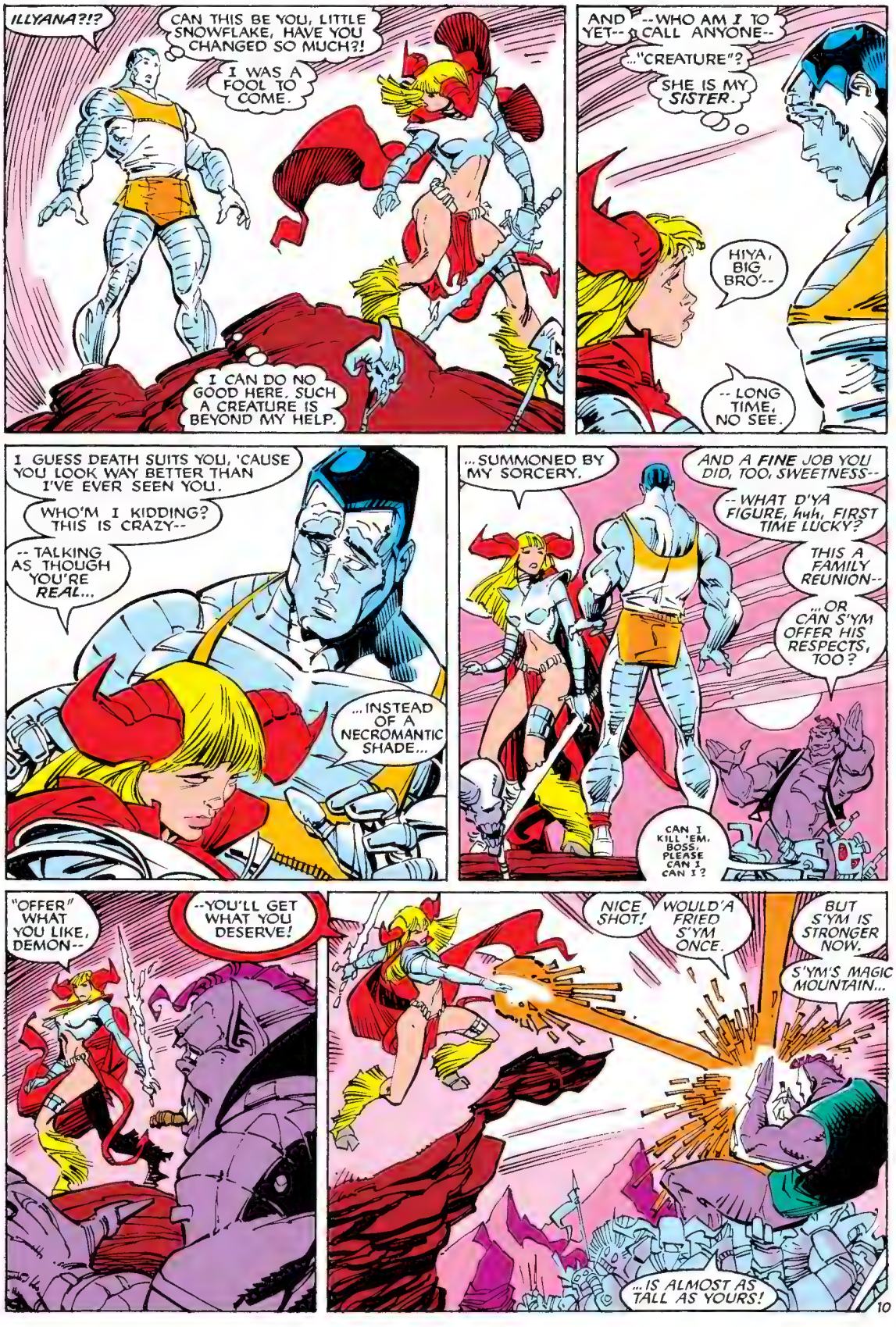
...WITH YOUR SILENT STARE?
SMALL WONDER. NO LONGER AM I A MAN OF FLESH AND BLOOD...
...BUT OF LIVING STEEL.
?
CLOUDS, BLOCKING THE SUN--
--AND NOW--
--RAIN!?!
HSSSFSS
SZSSS
STORM?!
THIS IS YOUR DOING?
YOU LOOKED AS THOUGH YOU COULD USE A COOLING SHOWER... ... SO I MADE ONE FOR YOU.
SPACEEBA, ORORO. I AM GRATEFUL.
I HAD NOT REALIZED HOW HOT I'D BECOME.
YOU ARE FAR STRONGER AND TOUGHER THAN YOU WERE, PETER-- A TRUE COLOSSUS--
--BUT THOSE NEW ASSETS CARRY WITH THEM THEIR OWN SPECIAL LIABILITIES.
SO I AM LEARNING...
...THE HARD WAY.
IS THAT ALL THAT TROUBLES YOU?
WHY DO YOU ASK? HAS PSYLOCKE READ MY THOUGHTS AND TOLD THEM TO YOU?!
SHAME, PETER! BETSY WOULD NEVER DO SUCH A THING, SHE RESPECTS OTHERS' PRIVACY FAR TOO MUCH.
I DO NOT NEED TO BE A TELEPATH TO KNOW WHEN A DEAR FRIEND IS IN PAIN.

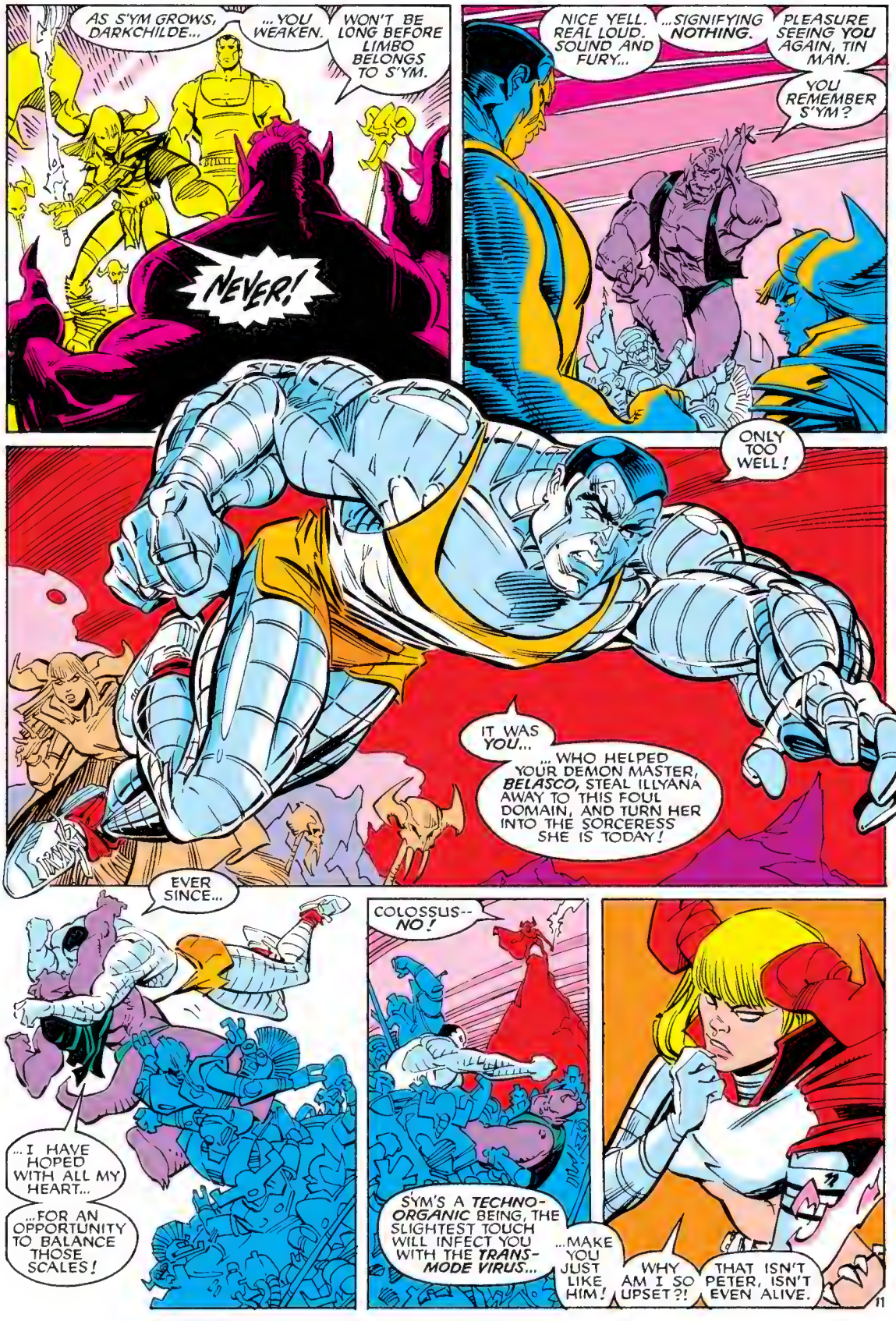
FORGIVE ME--
Whuaff?!
COME--
--LET MY WINDS...
...CARRY US BOTH BACK TO TOWN.
I PREFER TO KEEP MY FEET ON SOLID GROUND--
--ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS WHEN I FALL FROM ANY HEIGHT.
DO NOT WORRY, I SHALL NOT DROP YOU.
SO--TELL ME, WHAT IS THE MATTER?
Sigh.
IT IS ILLYANA, STORM-- I WONDER IF MY DREAMS OF HER ARE NOT SOME FORM OF WARNING, THAT SHE IS IN DANGER.
A CRY FOR HELP.
AND IF THEY ARE, PETER...
...WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?
I DO NOT MEAN TO BE CRUEL, BUT AS FAR AS THE WORLD IS CONCERNED, WE X-MEN ARE DEAD.
BECAUSE OUR FOES BELIEVE THAT-- AS WELL AS OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY--
--WE HAVE AN UNPARALLELED OPPORTUNITY TO STRIKE AT THEM WITHOUT FEAR OF IMPERILING THOSE WE CARE FOR.
CAST THAT ASIDE, AND ALL OUR WORK, OUR SACRIFICES...
...WILL HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING-- DA, ORORO, I UNDERSTAND.
AS COMRADE LENIN TAUGHT, THE COMMUNITY-- OUR PURPOSE--
--MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE DESIRES OF THE INDIVIDUAL.
MY DREAMS PROBABLY MEAN NOTHING. ILLYANA IS PROBABLY FINE.
I JUST WISH...
...I KNEW FOR CERTAIN.

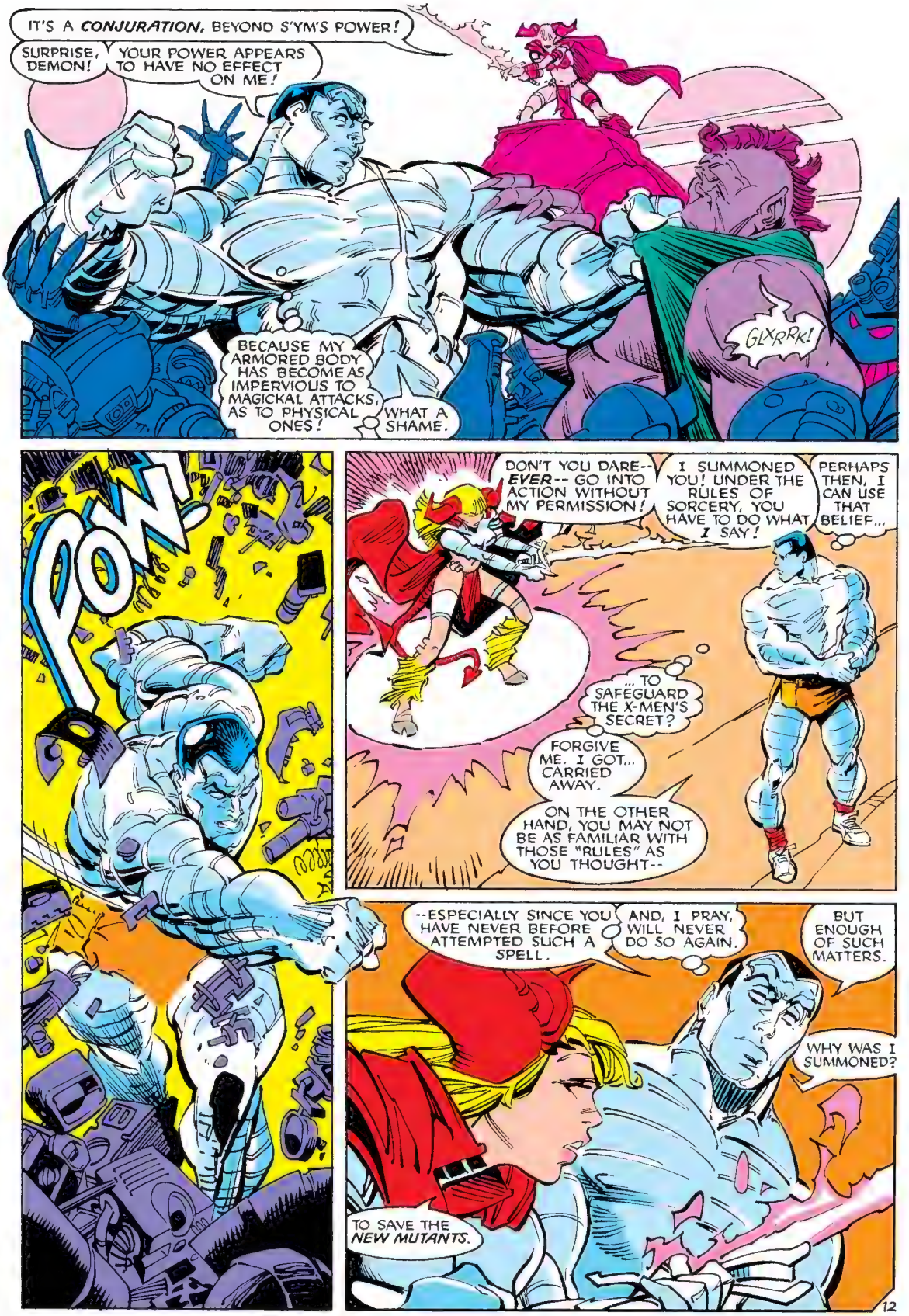

LATER...
... AFTER DINNER--
--A TRULY VALIANT CULINARY EFFORT ON ROGUE'S PART...
CRACK!
ANOTHER PLATE, WOLVERINE.
WE AIN'T GOT THAT MANY LEFT, Y'KNOW.
THERE'S ALWAYS PAPER.
PUT A SOCK IN IT, HAVOK.
JUST RELAX, PETEY--
--REMEMBER THE EXERCISES I'M TEACHING YOU--
-- YOU STILL HAVE NERVES, SENSATION IN YOUR FINGERS--
--TRY TO FEEL WITH 'EM--
--FOCUS YOUR CONCENTRATION, REFINE YOUR MOTOR CONTROL...
YOU ASK ME...
I DIDN'T.
...I THINK IT'S PRETTY DARN SNEAKY FOR THE BIG GALOOT TO BE SO POWERFUL AND CLUMSY WE DON'T DARE LET HIM DO THE DISHES.
OR HOUSEWORK.
CATCH, DAZZLER!
THANKS, LONGSHOT.
BASIC BULL IN THE CHINA SHOP, THAT'S OUR COLOSSUS.
THE LUCKY DEVIL.
STORM, COULD YOU PLEASE MAKE THE RAIN A BIT MORE INTENSE FOR RINSING-- GREAT, THAT'S PERFECT.
DISHES ARE DONE, BOSS.
LOOK, ORORO...
...I KNOW, MOST OF THE TEAM, THEY DON'T HAVE MUCH IN THE WAY OF FAMILY--
--OUTSIDE OF EACH OTHER.
BUT I'VE GOT A MOM AND A SISTER AND I THINK I KNOW WHAT PETER'S GOING THROUGH.
I KNOW WHAT'S SENSIBLE AND RATIONAL AND NECESSARY...
...BUT I LIKE TO THINK I ALSO KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT.
ORORO, WE SHOULD LET HIM GO.

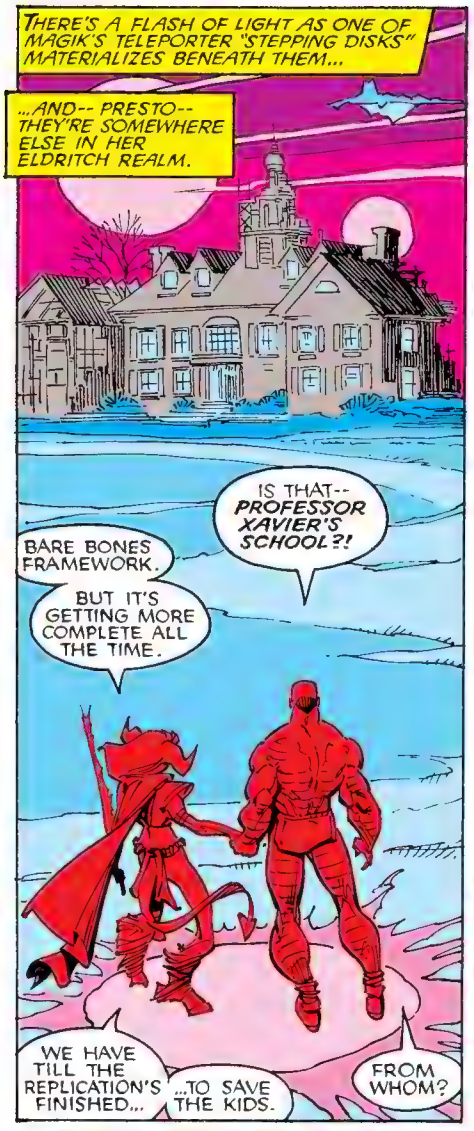
I SECOND THE MOTION.
HOW USEFUL IS HE TO THE TEAM IF, INSIDE, HE'S WORRYING ABOUT HIS SISTER?
MOREOVER, HE WOULDN'T EVEN BE IN THIS FIX IF HE HADN'T COME TO OUR RESCUE IN DALLAS.
WE OWE THE GUY, STORM.
ALEX, IT IS NOT--
eh??
GATEWAY?!
WHAT'S HE WANT?!
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS ANYONE'S, DARLIN', SINCE HE DON'T SPEAK.
HE IS POINTING AT ME!
'PEARS LIKE...
...HE WANTS YOU TO FOLLOW.
STORM--WHAT--?!
YOUR HEART LED YOU TO US IN OUR HOUR OF NEED, PETER.
PERHAPS THE MOMENT HAS COME TO TRUST IT AGAIN.
AND PLACE THE NEEDS OF THE ONE ABOVE THOSE OF THE MANY.
WHEN GATEWAY OPENS HIS TELE-PORTATIONAL PORTAL, COLOSSUS, STEP THROUGH.
AND WHEN YOU ARE READY, HE WILL BRING YOU HOME THE SAME WAY.
THE ANCIENT ABORIGINE SPINS HIS BULLROARER, FILLING THE NIGHT WITH ITS LOW, RESONANT THRUM-HUMM...
...AND, WHEN HIS BONFIRE BLAZES ITS BRIGHTEST, CASTING A MULTITUDE OF SPARKS TO THE HEAVENS...
ANYBODY WONDER...
FLASH!
...HOW GATEWAY KNOWS WHERE TO SEND HIM?
SAME WAY HE DOES, SUGAR...
...WHEN HE SENDS US ON OUR MERRY WAY.
HE JUST-- KNOWS.
BEST O' LUCK, PETEY!
HAVE NO FEAR, COMRADES...
...I'LL BE BACK!

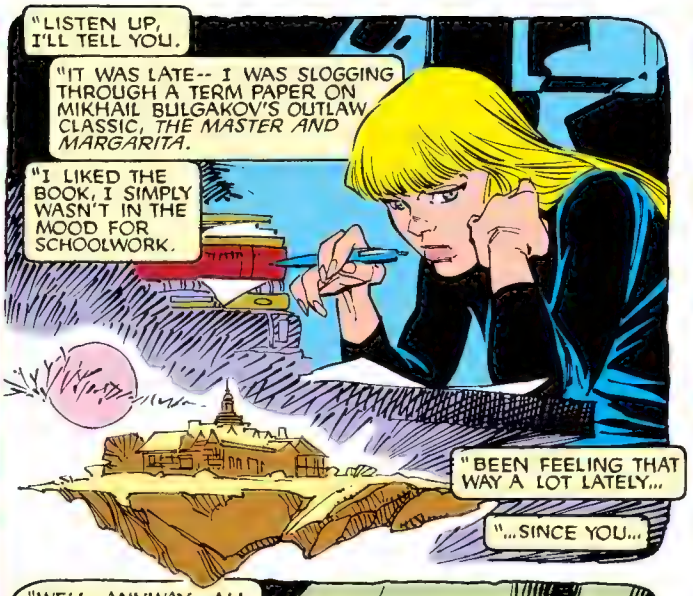

ANOTHER PLACE.
IT'S CALLED LIMBO--
--AND IT EXISTS BEYOND THE NORMAL, RATIONAL STRICTURES OF SPACE AND TIME.
HERE, REALITY IS A MUTABLE CONCEPT, WHATEVER THE REALM'S RULER DESIRES.
UNFORTUNATELY, AT THE MOMENT, THERE'S A CIVIL WAR GOING ON, LED BY THE UPSTART DEMON S'YM AGAINST THE CURRENT SORCERESS SUPREME, THE DARK-CHILDE ARCHIMAGE...
...ILLYANA NIKOLOVNA RASPUTIN.
SO DON'T KEEP US IN SUSPENSE, BIG BOSS...
...WHAT'S THE BRAT-BABE DOIN'?
WATCH THE MOUTH, SMILEY-FACE.
MAGIK THERE SENT YOU BOYS TO LIMBO.
YOU SERVE S'YM NOW.
YOU SHOW SOME RESPECT--
--OR ELSE!
YESSIR! ANYTHING YOU SAY, SIR!
"IT'S A MAJOR SPELL," THE DEMON SAYS, HIS ROUGH VOICE TOUCHED WITH UNACCUSTOMED AWE...
"...AS BIG AN' BLACK AS THEY COME:
"...NECROMANCY--TO SUMMON THE DEAD BACK TO LIFE!"
FTS
ZASK!
BY ALL THE SPIRITS OF THE ABYSS...
BY HEART-BLOOD AND SOULFIRE...
...I SUMMON...
BUT-- BEFORE THE NAME CAN BE SPOKEN, THE DREAD POWERS INVOKED, THE SPELL COMPLETED...
...HE IS THERE!

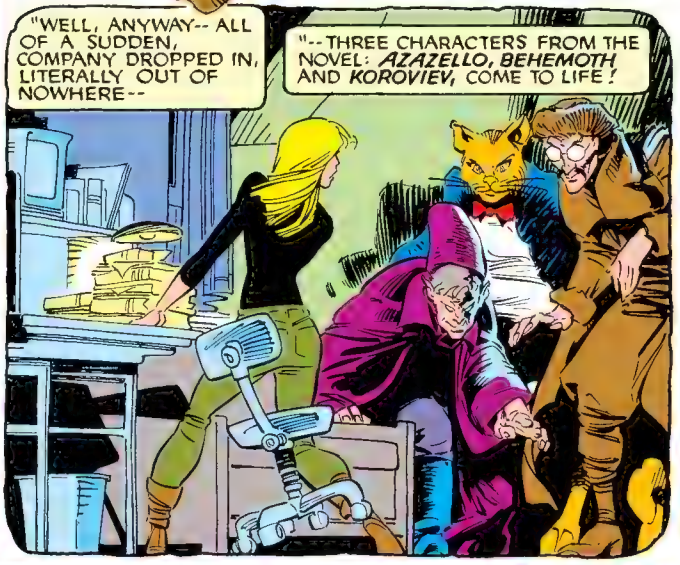

ILLYANA?!?
CAN THIS BE YOU, LITTLE SNOWFLAKE, HAVE YOU CHANGED SO MUCH?!
I WAS A FOOL TO COME.
I CAN DO NO GOOD HERE. SUCH A CREATURE IS BEYOND MY HELP.
AND YET--
--WHO AM I TO CALL ANYONE--
..."CREATURE"?
SHE IS MY SISTER.
HIYA, BIG BRO'--
-- LONG TIME, NO SEE.
I GUESS DEATH SUITS YOU, 'CAUSE YOU LOOK WAY BETTER THAN I'VE EVER SEEN YOU.
WHO'M I KIDDING? THIS IS CRAZY--
-- TALKING AS THOUGH YOU'RE REAL...
...INSTEAD OF A NECROMANTIC SHADE...
...SUMMONED BY MY SORCERY.
AND A FINE JOB YOU DID, TOO, SWEETNESS--
-- WHAT D'YA FIGURE, huh, FIRST TIME LUCKY?
THIS A FAMILY REUNION--
...OR CAN S'YM OFFER HIS RESPECTS, TOO?
CAN I KILL 'EM, BOSS, PLEASE CAN I, CAN I?
"OFFER" WHAT YOU LIKE, DEMON--
--YOU'LL GET WHAT YOU DESERVE!
NICE SHOT!
WOULD'A FRIED S'YM ONCE.
BUT S'YM IS STRONGER NOW.
S'YM'S MAGIC MOUNTAIN...
...IS ALMOST AS TALL AS YOURS!

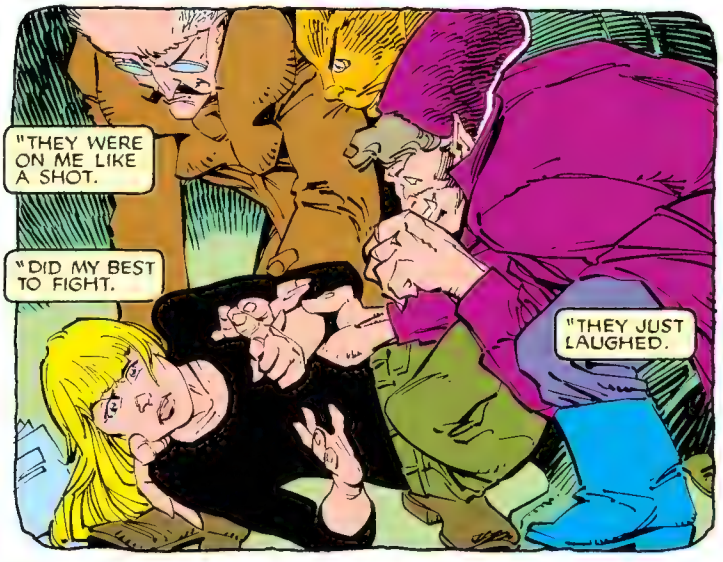

AS S'YM GROWS, DARKCHILDE...
...YOU WEAKEN.
WON'T BE LONG BEFORE LIMBO BELONGS TO S'YM.
NEVER!
NICE YELL. REAL LOUD. SOUND AND FURY...
...SIGNIFYING NOTHING.
PLEASURE SEEING YOU AGAIN, TIN MAN.
YOU REMEMBER S'YM?
ONLY TOO WELL!
IT WAS YOU...
...WHO HELPED YOUR DEMON MASTER, BELASCO, STEAL ILLYANA AWAY TO THIS FOUL DOMAIN, AND TURN HER INTO THE SORCERESS SHE IS TODAY!
EVER SINCE...
...I HAVE HOPED WITH ALL MY HEART...
...FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO BALANCE THOSE SCALES!
COLOSSUS--NO!
S'YM'S A TECHNO-ORGANIC BEING, THE SLIGHTEST TOUCH WILL INFECT YOU WITH THE TRANS-MODE VIRUS...
...MAKE YOU JUST LIKE HIM!
WHY AM I SO UPSET?!
THAT ISN'T PETER, ISN'T EVEN ALIVE.

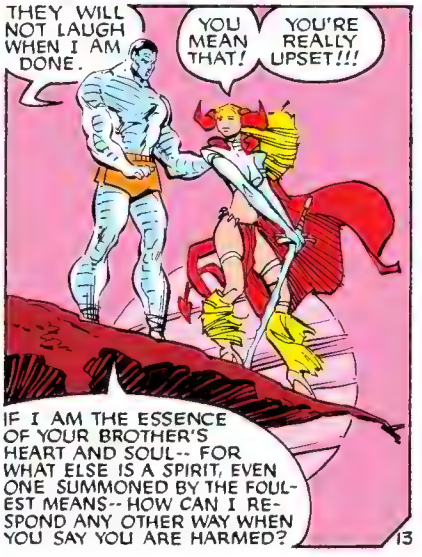

IT'S A CONJURATION, BEYOND S'YM'S POWER!
SURPRISE, DEMON!
YOUR POWER APPEARS TO HAVE NO EFFECT ON ME!
BECAUSE MY ARMORED BODY HAS BECOME AS IMPERVIOUS TO MAGICKAL ATTACKS, AS TO PHYSICAL ONES!
WHAT A SHAME.
GLXRRK!
POW
DON'T YOU DARE-- EVER-- GO INTO ACTION WITHOUT MY PERMISSION!
I SUMMONED YOU! UNDER THE RULES OF SORCERY, YOU HAVE TO DO WHAT I SAY!
PERHAPS THEN, I CAN USE THAT BELIEF...
... TO SAFEGUARD THE X-MEN'S SECRET?
FORGIVE ME. I GOT... CARRIED AWAY.
ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU MAY NOT BE AS FAMILIAR WITH THOSE "RULES" AS YOU THOUGHT--
--ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU HAVE NEVER BEFORE ATTEMPTED SUCH A SPELL.
AND, I PRAY, WILL NEVER DO SO AGAIN.
BUT ENOUGH OF SUCH MATTERS.
WHY WAS I SUMMONED?
TO SAVE THE NEW MUTANTS.

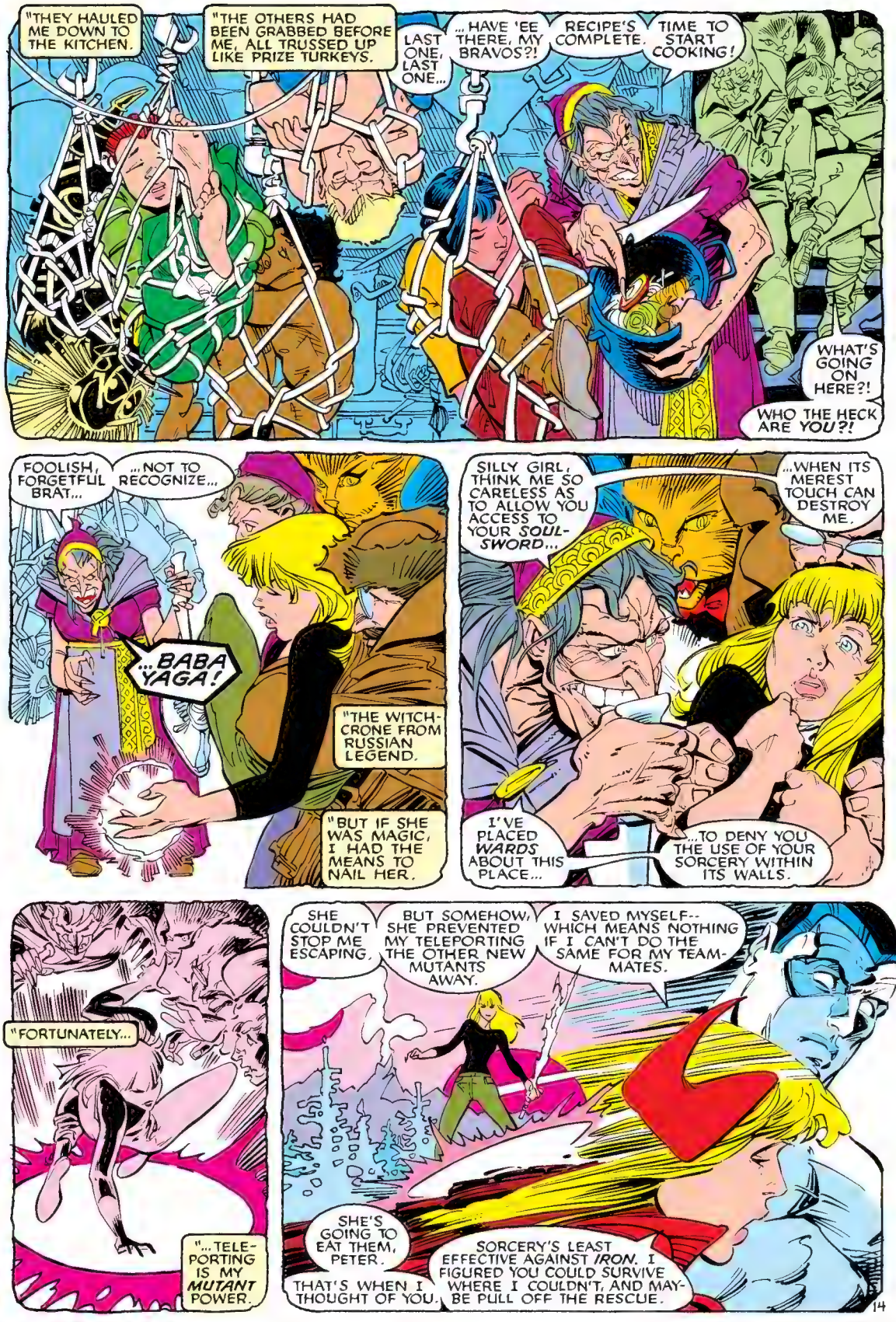

THERE'S A FLASH OF LIGHT AS ONE OF MAGIK'S TELEPORTER "STEPPING DISKS" MATERIALIZES BENEATH THEM...
...AND-- PRESTO-- THEY'RE SOMEWHERE ELSE IN HER ELDRITCH REALM.
IS THAT-- PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL?!
BARE BONES FRAMEWORK.
BUT IT'S GETTING MORE COMPLETE ALL THE TIME.
WE HAVE TILL THE REPLICATION'S FINISHED...
...TO SAVE THE KIDS.
FROM WHOM?

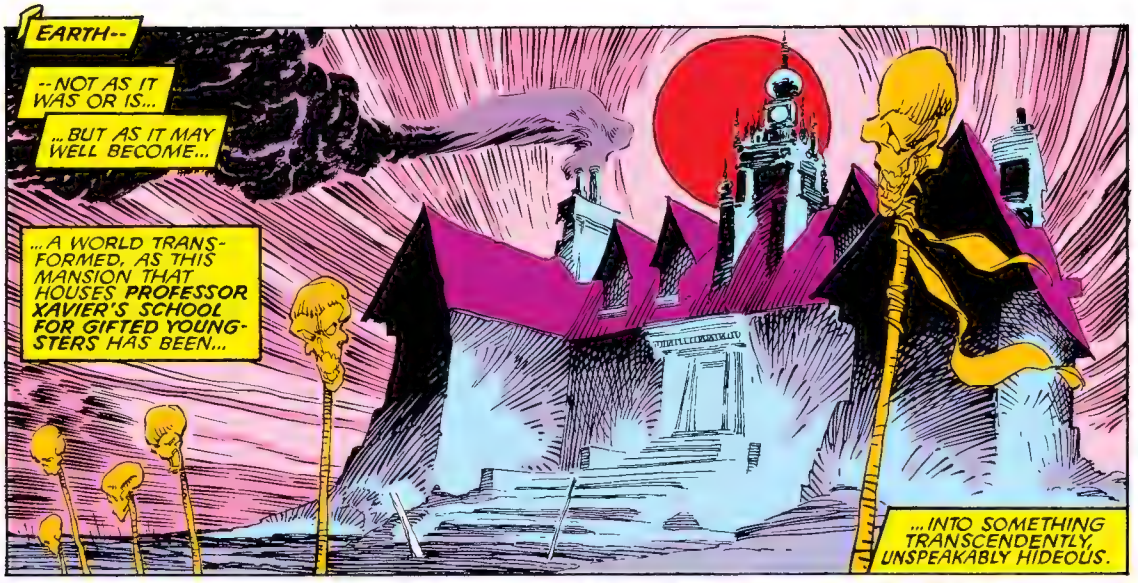

"LISTEN UP, I'LL TELL YOU.
"IT WAS LATE-- I WAS SLOGGING THROUGH A TERM PAPER ON MIKHAIL BULGAKOV'S OUTLAW CLASSIC, THE MASTER AND MARGARITA.
"I LIKED THE BOOK, I SIMPLY WASN'T IN THE MOOD FOR SCHOOLWORK.
"BEEN FEELING THAT WAY A LOT LATELY...
"...SINCE YOU...

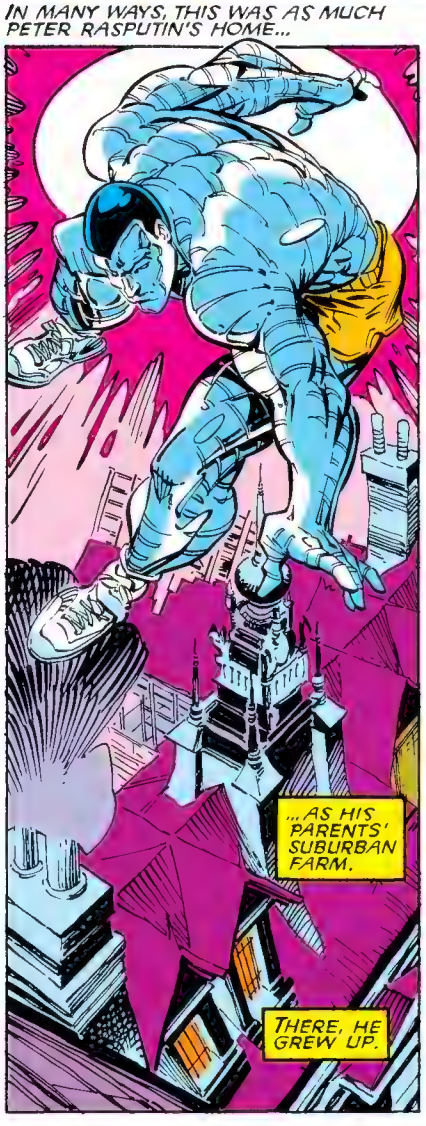

"WELL, ANYWAY-- ALL OF A SUDDEN, COMPANY DROPPED IN, LITERALLY OUT OF NOWHERE--
"--THREE CHARACTERS FROM THE NOVEL: AZAZELLO, BEHEMOTH AND KOROVIEV, COME TO LIFE!


"THEY WERE ON ME LIKE A SHOT.
"I DID MY BEST TO FIGHT.
"THEY JUST LAUGHED.

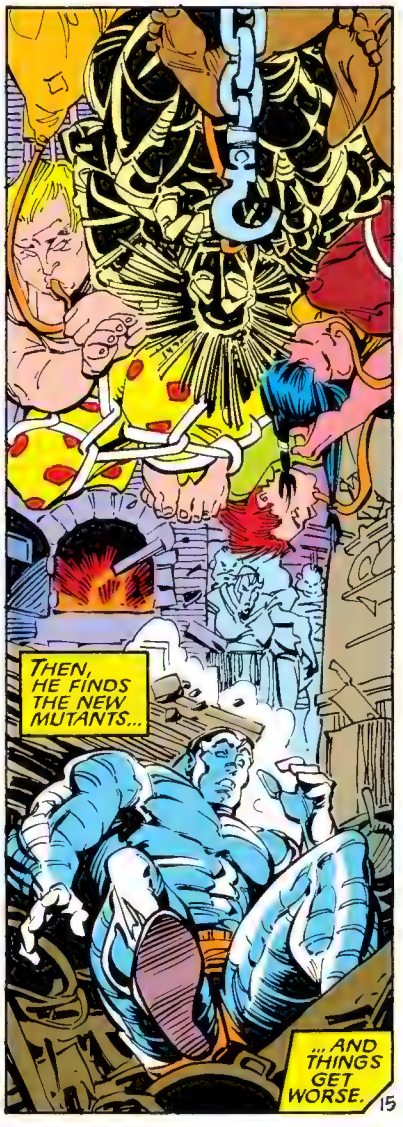

THEY WILL NOT LAUGH WHEN I AM DONE.
YOU MEAN THAT!
YOU'RE REALLY UPSET!!!
IF I AM THE ESSENCE OF YOUR BROTHER'S HEART AND SOUL-- FOR WHAT ELSE IS A SPIRIT, EVEN ONE SUMMONED BY THE FOULEST MEANS-- HOW CAN I RESPOND ANY OTHER WAY WHEN YOU SAY YOU ARE HARMED?


"THEY HAULED ME DOWN TO THE KITCHEN.
"THE OTHERS HAD BEEN GRABBED BEFORE ME, ALL TRUSSED UP LIKE PRIZE TURKEYS.
LAST ONE, LAST ONE...
...HAVE 'EE THERE, MY BRAVOS?!
RECIPE'S COMPLETE.
TIME TO START COOKING!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!
WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?!
FOOLISH, FORGETFUL BRAT...
...NOT TO RECOGNIZE...
...BABA YAGA!
"THE WITCH-CRONE FROM RUSSIAN LEGEND.
"BUT IF SHE WAS MAGIC, I HAD THE MEANS TO NAIL HER.
SILLY GIRL, THINK ME SO CARELESS AS TO ALLOW YOU ACCESS TO YOUR SOUL-SWORD...
...WHEN ITS MEREST TOUCH CAN DESTROY ME.
I'VE PLACED WARDS ABOUT THIS PLACE...
...TO DENY YOU THE USE OF YOUR SORCERY WITHIN ITS WALLS.
"FORTUNATELY...
"...TELE-PORTING IS MY MUTANT POWER.
SHE COULDN'T STOP ME ESCAPING.
BUT SOMEHOW, SHE PREVENTED MY TELEPORTING THE OTHER NEW MUTANTS AWAY.
I SAVED MYSELF--WHICH MEANS NOTHING IF I CAN'T DO THE SAME FOR MY TEAM-MATES.
SHE'S GOING TO EAT THEM, PETER.
THAT'S WHEN I THOUGHT OF YOU.
SORCERY'S LEAST EFFECTIVE AGAINST IRON. I FIGURED YOU COULD SURVIVE WHERE I COULDN'T, AND MAY-BE PULL OFF THE RESCUE.

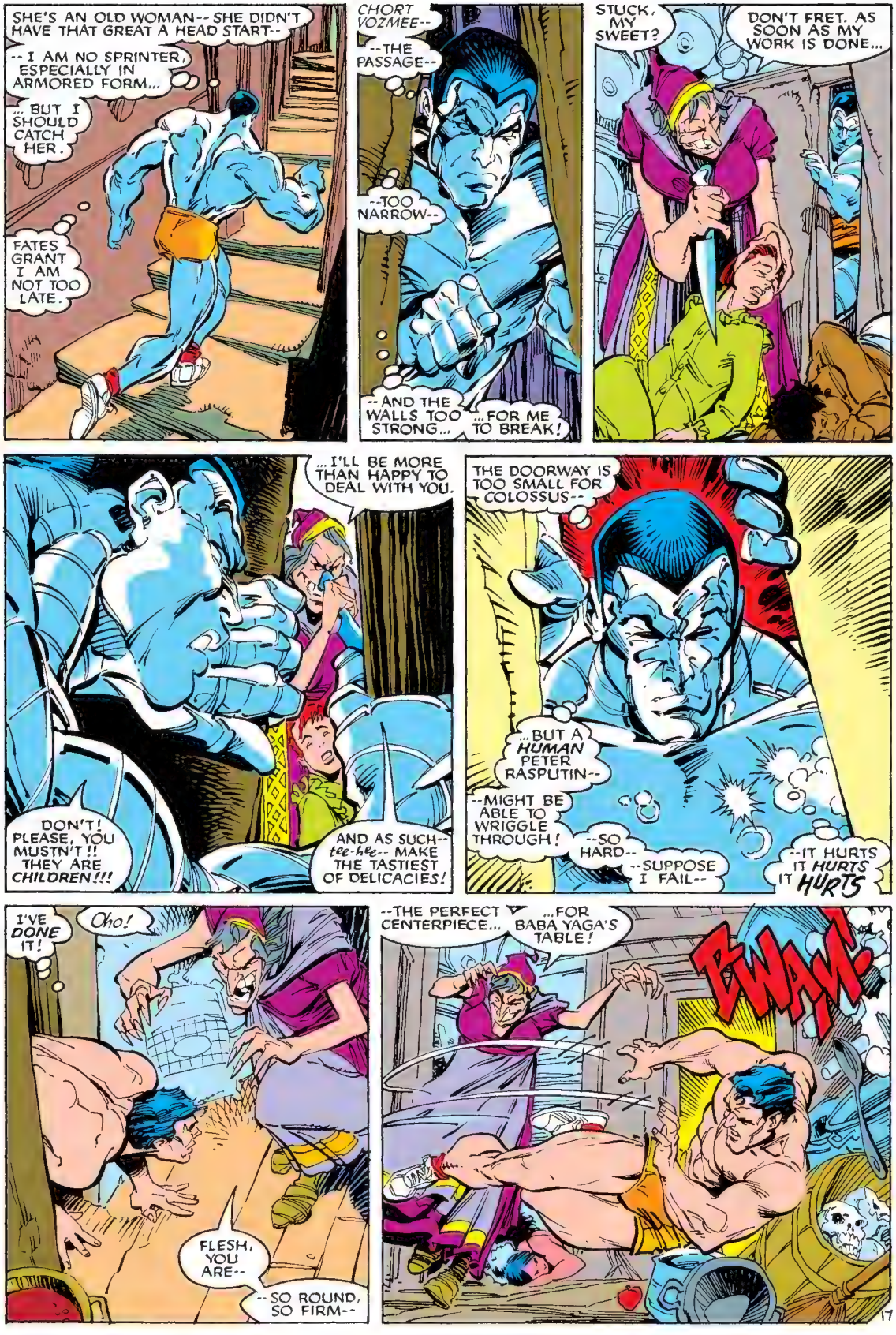

EARTH--
--NOT AS IT WAS OR IS...
...BUT AS IT MAY WELL BECOME...
...A WORLD TRANSFORMED, AS THIS MANSION THAT HOUSES PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS HAS BEEN...
...INTO SOMETHING TRANSCENDENTLY, UNSPEAKABLY HIDEOUS.

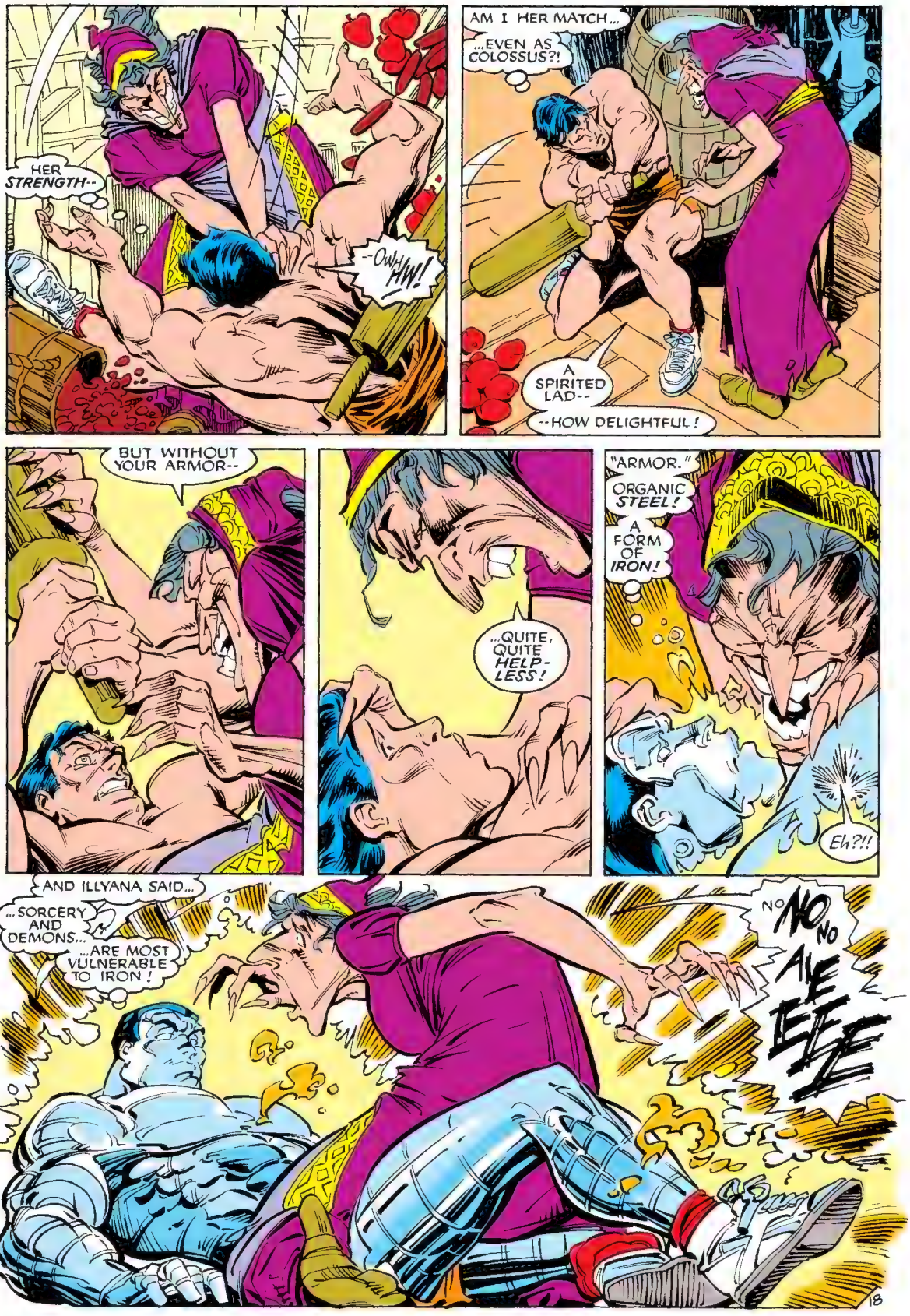

IN MANY WAYS, THIS WAS AS MUCH PETER RASPUTIN'S HOME...
...AS HIS PARENTS' SUBURBAN FARM.
THERE, HE GREW UP.

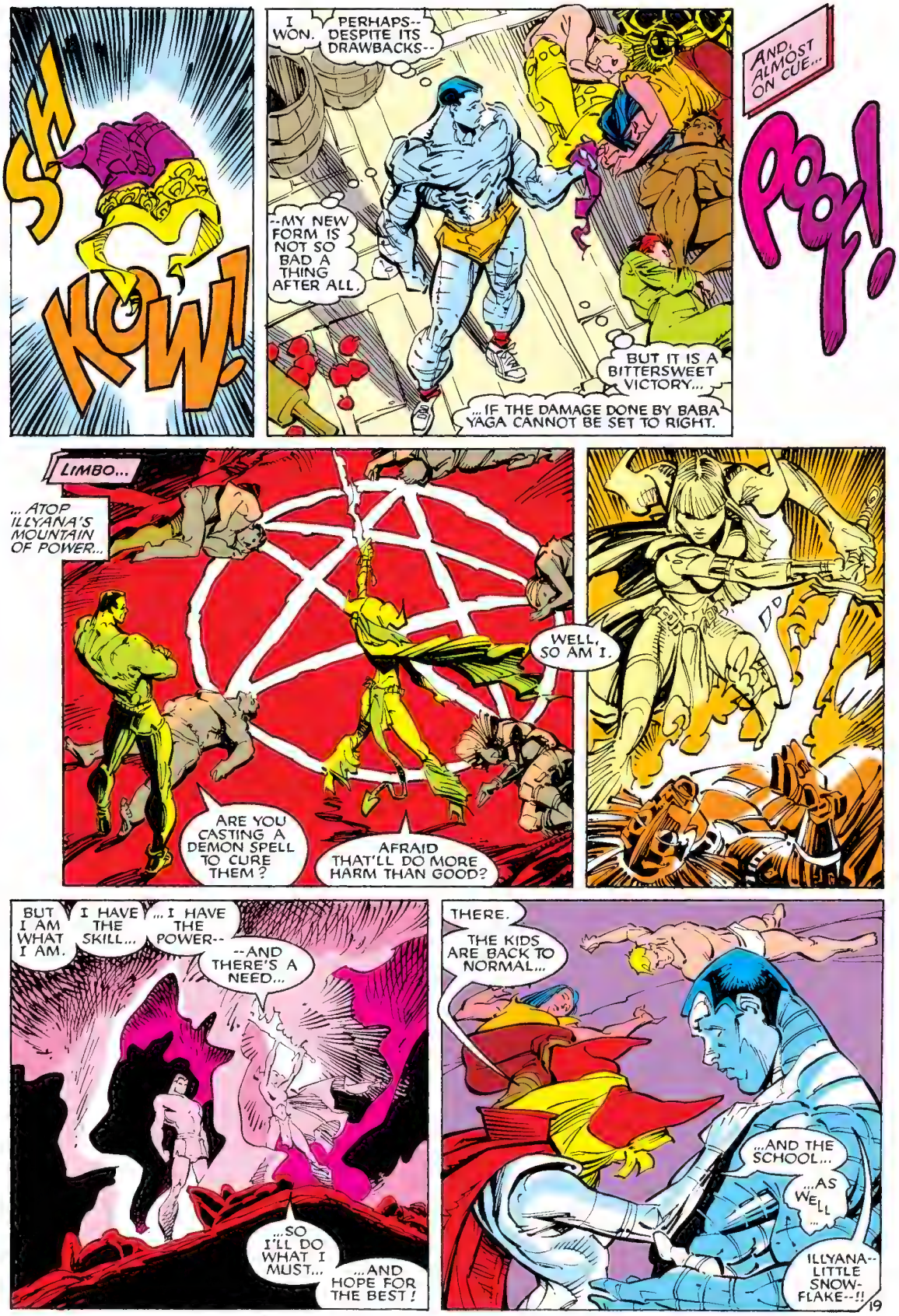
HERE, HE BECAME A MAN.
AND IT TEARS HIS HEART...
...TO SEE WHAT SORCERY HAS DONE TO IT.
STROOM!

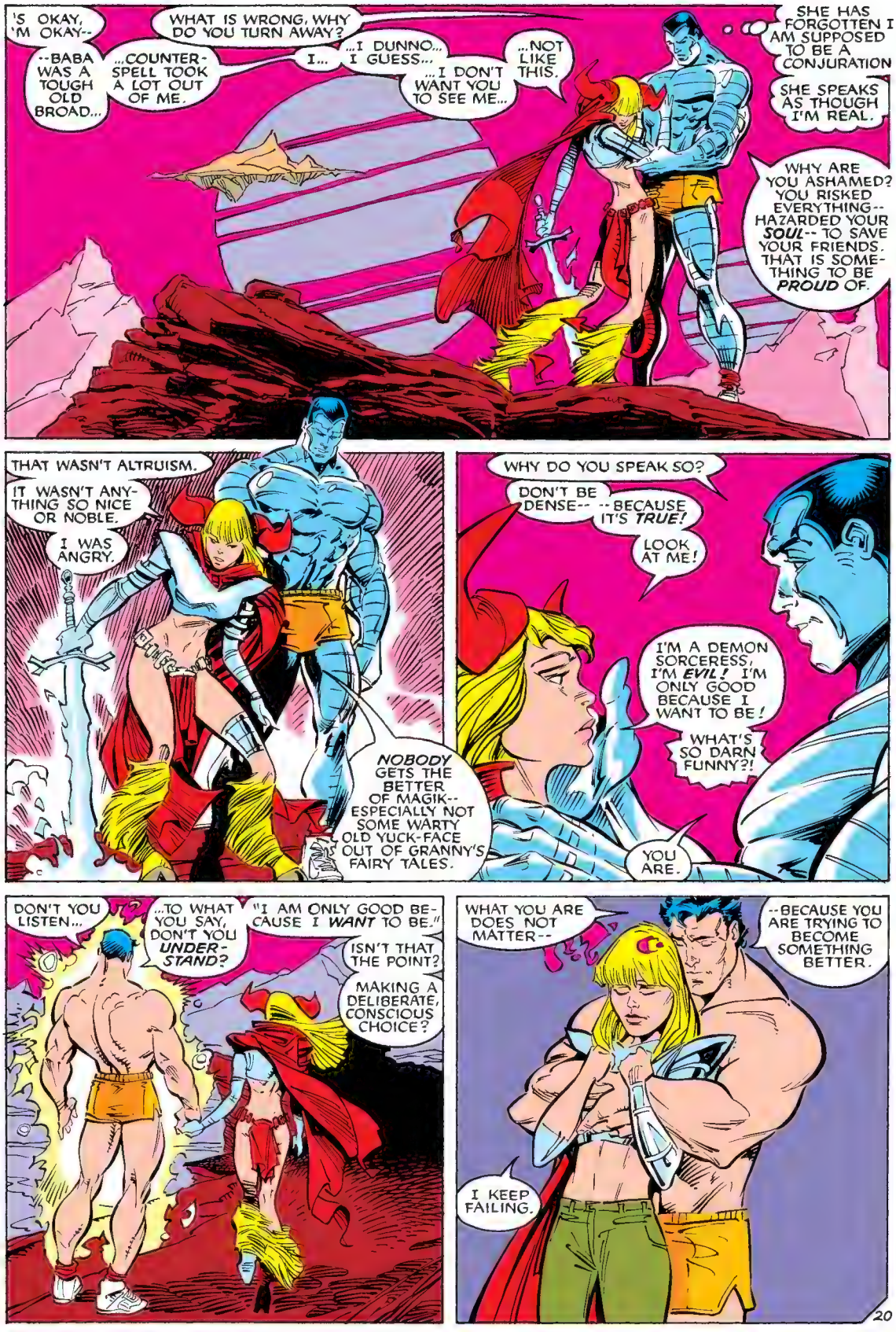

THEN, HE FINDS THE NEW MUTANTS...
...AND THINGS GET WORSE.

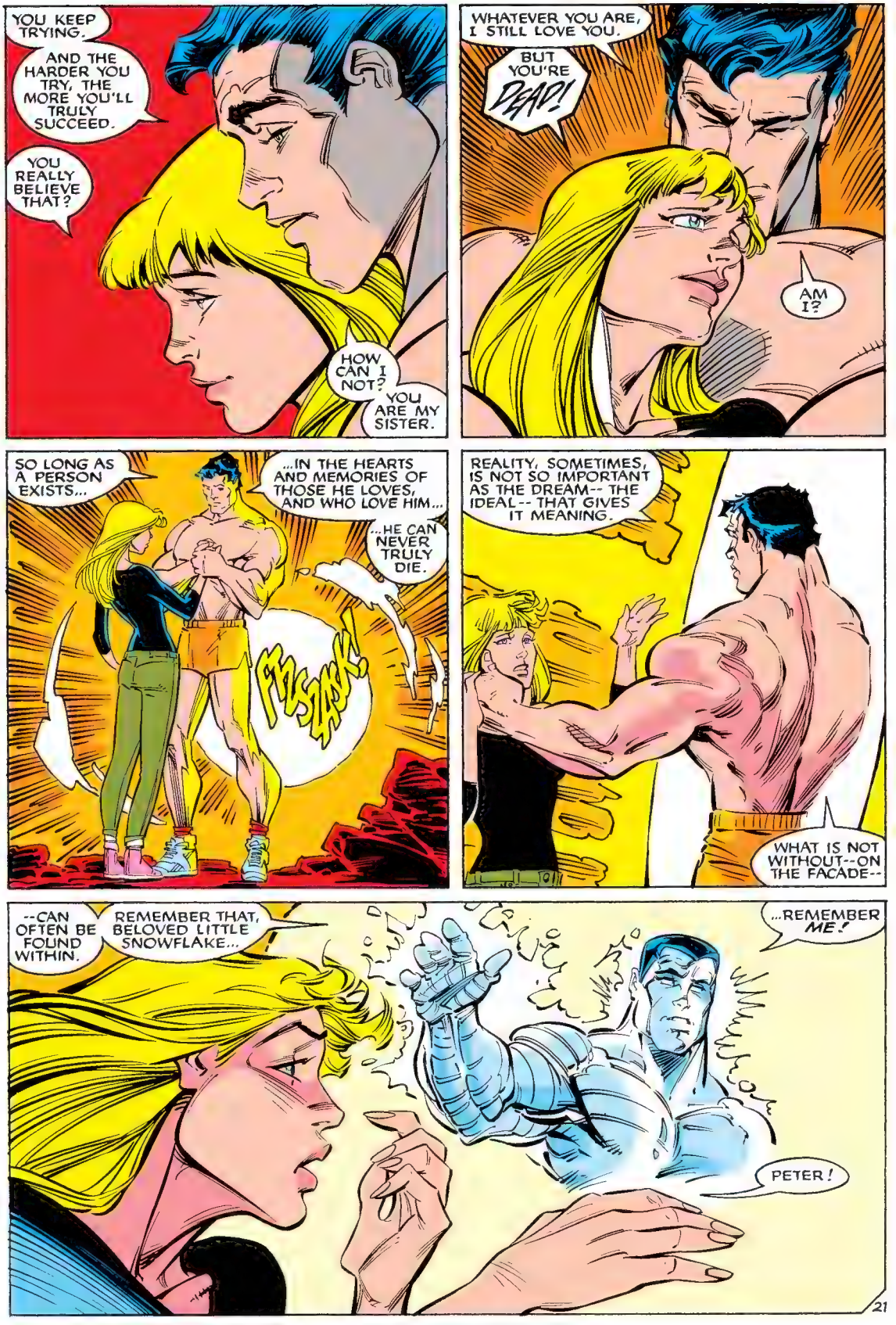
INTRUDER ha-HAH--
-- KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR...
...SENT TO THE RESCUE...
...SENT TO HIS DOOM!
TEAR HIM UP, MY PRETTIES...
...WE'LL CRACK HIS BONES...
...FOR APPETIZERS!
IN THE MEAN-WHILE...
... SINCE THE BABIES ARE FATTENED AND SEASONED...
... FOR THE SLAUGHTER...
...TIME I WAS ABOUT MY COOKING!
NO!
DON'T BE TOO LONG, DEARIES!
IT'S ALWAYS BEST TO EAT YOUR DINNER...
... WHILE IT'S HOT!
TONIGHT, OGRES--
--AND FOREVER AFTER--
--IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT--
KLANK
--YOU WILL GO HUNGRY!

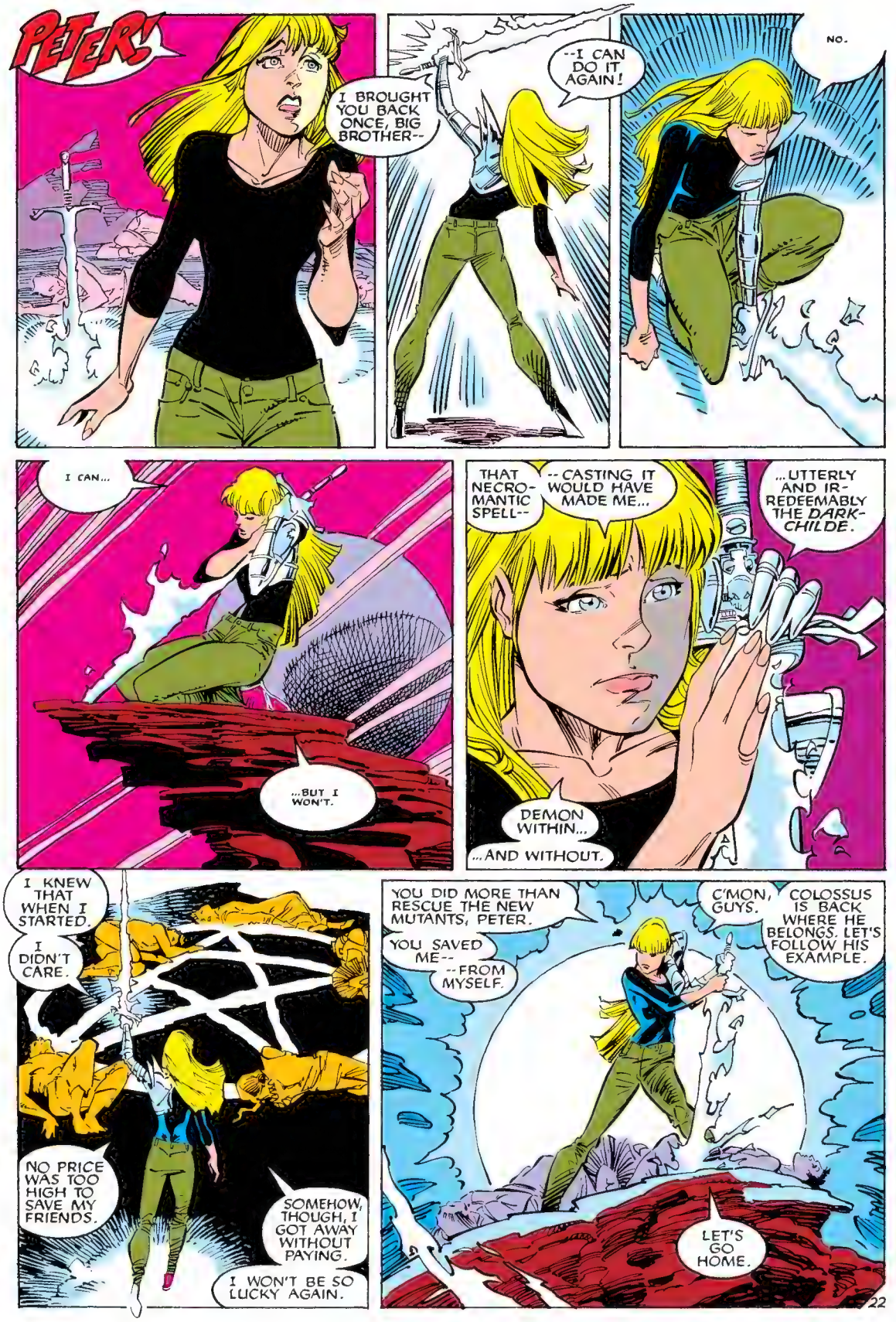

SHE'S AN OLD WOMAN-- SHE DIDN'T HAVE THAT GREAT A HEAD START--
-- I AM NO SPRINTER, ESPECIALLY IN ARMORED FORM...
... BUT I SHOULD CATCH HER.
FATES GRANT I AM NOT TOO LATE.
CHORT VOZMEE--
--THE PASSAGE--
--TOO NARROW--
-- AND THE WALLS TOO STRONG...
...FOR ME TO BREAK!
STUCK, MY SWEET?
DON'T FRET. AS SOON AS MY WORK IS DONE...
... I'LL BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO DEAL WITH YOU.
DON'T! PLEASE, YOU MUSTN'T!! THEY ARE CHILDREN!!!
AND AS SUCH-- tee-hee-- MAKE THE TASTIEST OF DELICACIES!
THE DOORWAY IS TOO SMALL FOR COLOSSUS--
...BUT A HUMAN PETER RASPUTIN--
--MIGHT BE ABLE TO WRIGGLE THROUGH!
--SO HARD--
--SUPPOSE I FAIL--
--IT HURTS IT HURTS IT HURTS
I'VE DONE IT!
Oho!
FLESH, YOU ARE--
-- SO ROUND, SO FIRM--
--THE PERFECT CENTERPIECE...
...FOR BABA YAGA'S TABLE!
FWAM!

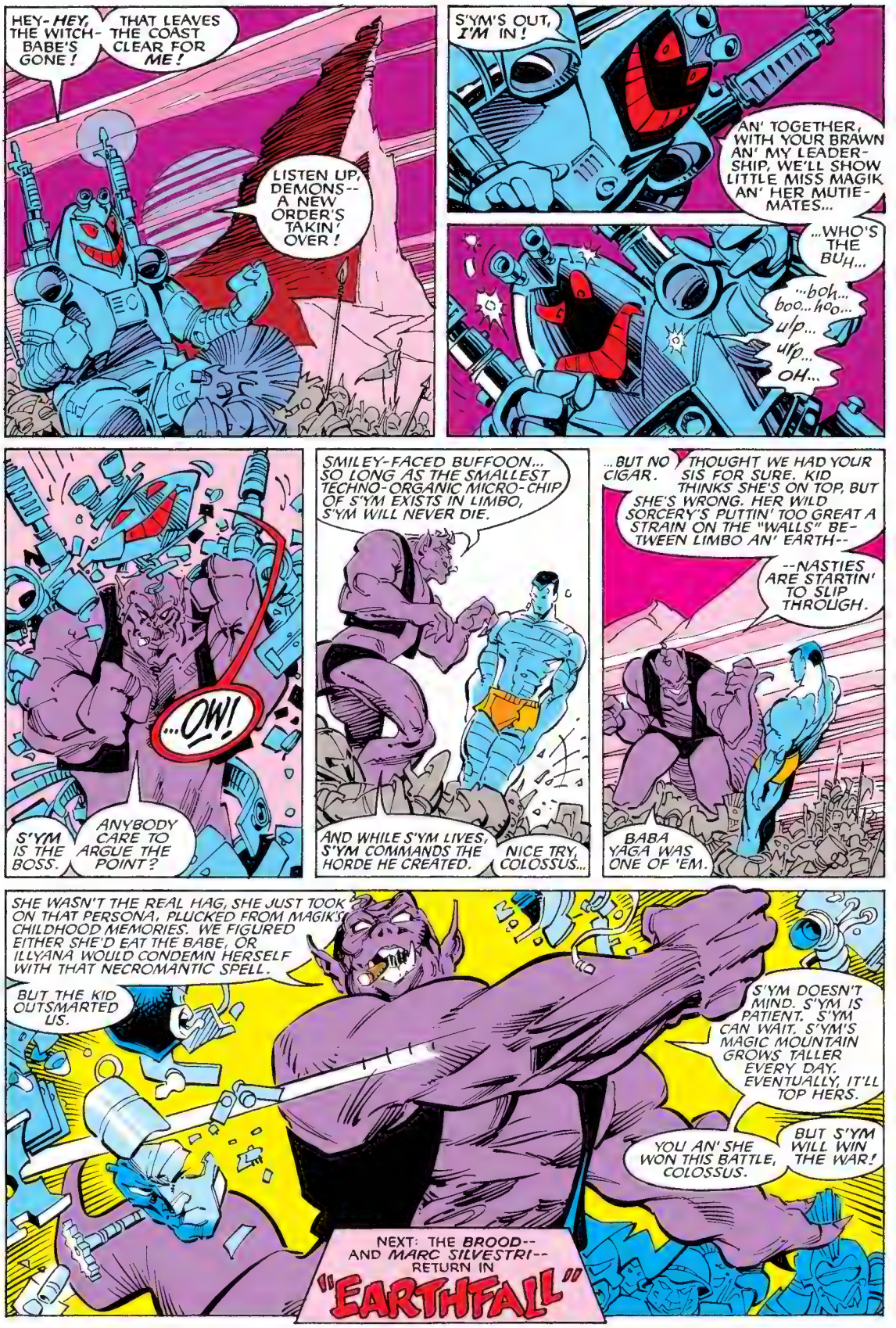

HER STRENGTH--
--OWHW!
AM I HER MATCH...
...EVEN AS COLOSSUS?!
A SPIRITED LAD--
--HOW DELIGHTFUL!
BUT WITHOUT YOUR ARMOR--
...QUITE, QUITE HELP-LESS!
"ARMOR."
ORGANIC STEEL!
A FORM OF IRON!
Eh?!!
AND ILLYANA SAID...
...SORCERY AND DEMONS...
...ARE MOST VULNERABLE TO IRON!
NO NO NO AIEEE


SHKOW!
I WON.
PERHAPS--DESPITE ITS DRAWBACKS--
--MY NEW FORM IS NOT SO BAD A THING AFTER ALL.
BUT IT IS A BITTERSWEET VICTORY...
...IF THE DAMAGE DONE BY BABA YAGA CANNOT BE SET TO RIGHT.
AND, ALMOST ON CUE...
POOF!
LIMBO...
...ATOP ILLYANA'S MOUNTAIN OF POWER...
ARE YOU CASTING A DEMON SPELL TO CURE THEM?
AFRAID THAT'LL DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD?
WELL, SO AM I.
BUT I AM WHAT I AM.
I HAVE THE SKILL...
...I HAVE THE POWER--
--AND THERE'S A NEED...
...SO I'LL DO WHAT I MUST...
...AND HOPE FOR THE BEST!
THERE.
THE KIDS ARE BACK TO NORMAL...
...AND THE SCHOOL...
...AS WELL...
ILLYANA--LITTLE SNOWFLAKE--!!

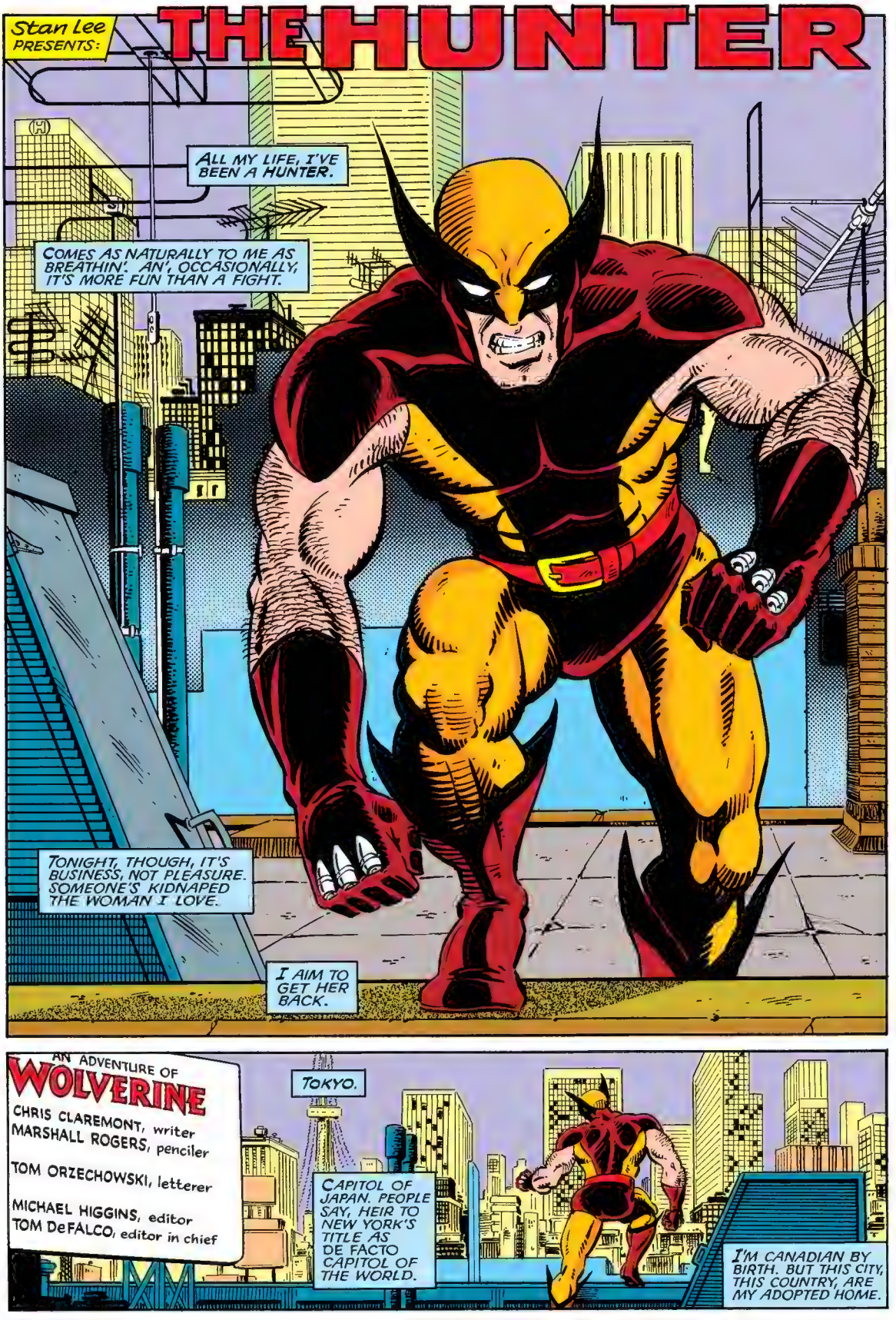

'S OKAY, 'M OKAY--
--BABA WAS A TOUGH OLD BROAD...
WHAT IS WRONG, WHY DO YOU TURN AWAY?
...COUNTER-SPELL TOOK A LOT OUT OF ME.
I...
...I DUNNO... I GUESS...
...I DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE ME...
...NOT LIKE THIS.
SHE HAS FORGOTTEN I AM SUPPOSED TO BE A CONJURATION
SHE SPEAKS AS THOUGH I'M REAL.
WHY ARE YOU ASHAMED? YOU RISKED EVERYTHING-- HAZARDED YOUR SOUL-- TO SAVE YOUR FRIENDS. THAT IS SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF.
THAT WASN'T ALTRUISM.
IT WASN'T ANYTHING SO NICE OR NOBLE.
I WAS ANGRY.
NOBODY GETS THE BETTER OF MAGIK-- ESPECIALLY NOT SOME WARTY OLD YUCK-FACE OUT OF GRANNY'S FAIRY TALES.
WHY DO YOU SPEAK SO?
DON'T BE DENSE--
--BECAUSE IT'S TRUE!
LOOK AT ME!
I'M A DEMON SORCERESS, I'M EVIL! I'M ONLY GOOD BECAUSE I WANT TO BE!
WHAT'S SO DARN FUNNY?!
YOU ARE.
DON'T YOU LISTEN...
...TO WHAT YOU SAY, DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
"I AM ONLY GOOD BECAUSE I WANT TO BE."
ISN'T THAT THE POINT?
MAKING A DELIBERATE, CONSCIOUS CHOICE?
WHAT YOU ARE DOES NOT MATTER--
--BECAUSE YOU ARE TRYING TO BECOME SOMETHING BETTER.
I KEEP FAILING.


YOU KEEP TRYING.
AND THE HARDER YOU TRY, THE MORE YOU'LL TRULY SUCCEED.
YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT?
HOW CAN I NOT?
YOU ARE MY SISTER.
WHATEVER YOU ARE, I STILL LOVE YOU.
BUT YOU'RE DEAD!
AM I?
SO LONG AS A PERSON EXISTS...
...IN THE HEARTS AND MEMORIES OF THOSE HE LOVES, AND WHO LOVE HIM...
...HE CAN NEVER TRULY DIE.
FZZZAK!
REALITY, SOMETIMES, IS NOT SO IMPORTANT AS THE DREAM-- THE IDEAL-- THAT GIVES IT MEANING.
WHAT IS NOT WITHOUT--ON THE FACADE--
--CAN OFTEN BE FOUND WITHIN.
REMEMBER THAT, BELOVED LITTLE SNOWFLAKE...
...REMEMBER ME!
PETER!


PETER!
I BROUGHT YOU BACK ONCE, BIG BROTHER--
--I CAN DO IT AGAIN!
NO.
I CAN...
...BUT I WON'T.
THAT NECRO-MANTIC SPELL--
--CASTING IT WOULD HAVE MADE ME...
...UTTERLY AND IR-REDEEMABLY THE DARK-CHILDE.
DEMON WITHIN...
...AND WITHOUT.
I KNEW THAT WHEN I STARTED.
I DIDN'T CARE.
NO PRICE WAS TOO HIGH TO SAVE MY FRIENDS.
SOMEHOW, THOUGH, I GOT AWAY WITHOUT PAYING.
I WON'T BE SO LUCKY AGAIN.
YOU DID MORE THAN RESCUE THE NEW MUTANTS, PETER.
YOU SAVED ME--
--FROM MYSELF.
C'MON, GUYS.
COLOSSUS IS BACK WHERE HE BELONGS. LET'S FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE.
LET'S GO HOME.

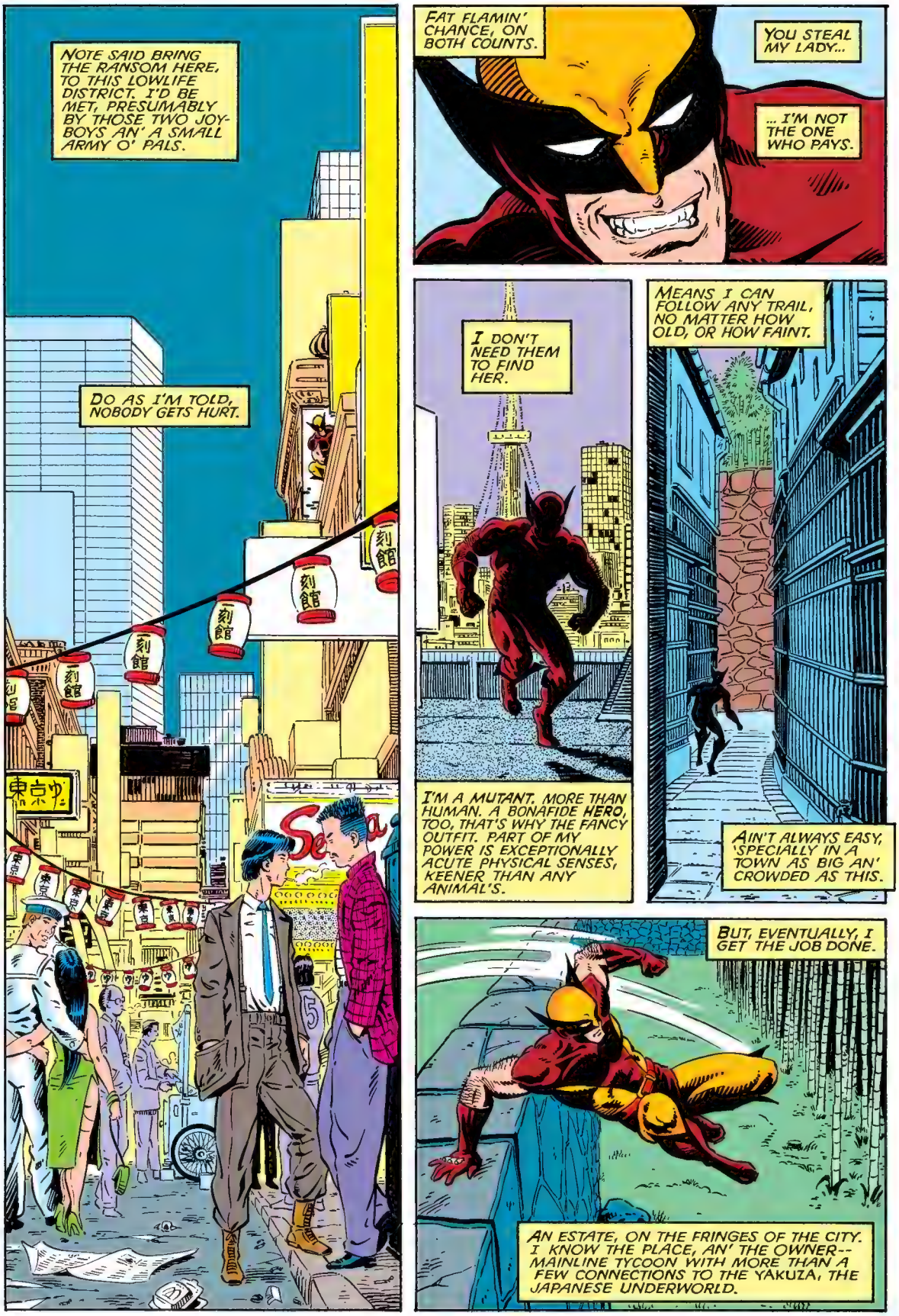

HEY- HEY, THE WITCH-BABE'S GONE!
THAT LEAVES THE COAST CLEAR FOR ME!
LISTEN UP, DEMONS-- A NEW ORDER'S TAKIN' OVER!
S'YM'S OUT, I'M IN!
AN' TOGETHER, WITH YOUR BRAWN AN' MY LEADER-SHIP, WE'LL SHOW LITTLE MISS MAGIK AN' HER MUTIE-MATES...
...WHO'S THE BUH...
...boh... boo... hoo... ulp... ulp... OH...
...OW!
S'YM IS THE BOSS.
ANYBODY CARE TO ARGUE THE POINT?
SMILEY-FACED BUFFOON... SO LONG AS THE SMALLEST TECHNO-ORGANIC MICRO-CHIP OF S'YM EXISTS IN LIMBO, S'YM WILL NEVER DIE.
AND WHILE S'YM LIVES, S'YM COMMANDS THE HORDE HE CREATED.
NICE TRY, COLOSSUS...
...BUT NO CIGAR. I THOUGHT WE HAD YOUR SIS FOR SURE. KID THINKS SHE'S ON TOP, BUT SHE'S WRONG. HER WILD SORCERY'S PUTTIN' TOO GREAT A STRAIN ON THE "WALLS" BE-TWEEN LIMBO AN' EARTH--
--NASTIES ARE STARTIN' TO SLIP THROUGH.
BABA YAGA WAS ONE OF 'EM.
SHE WASN'T THE REAL HAG, SHE JUST TOOK ON THAT PERSONA, PLUCKED FROM MAGIK'S CHILDHOOD MEMORIES. WE FIGURED EITHER SHE'D EAT THE BABE, OR ILLYANA WOULD CONDEMN HERSELF WITH THAT NECROMANTIC SPELL.
BUT THE KID OUTSMARTED US.
S'YM DOESN'T MIND. S'YM IS PATIENT. S'YM CAN WAIT. S'YM'S MAGIC MOUNTAIN GROWS TALLER EVERY DAY. EVENTUALLY, IT'LL TOP HERS.
YOU AN' SHE WON THIS BATTLE, COLOSSUS.
BUT S'YM WILL WIN THE WAR!
NEXT: THE BROOD-- AND MARC SILVESTRI-- RETURN IN
"EARTHFALL"

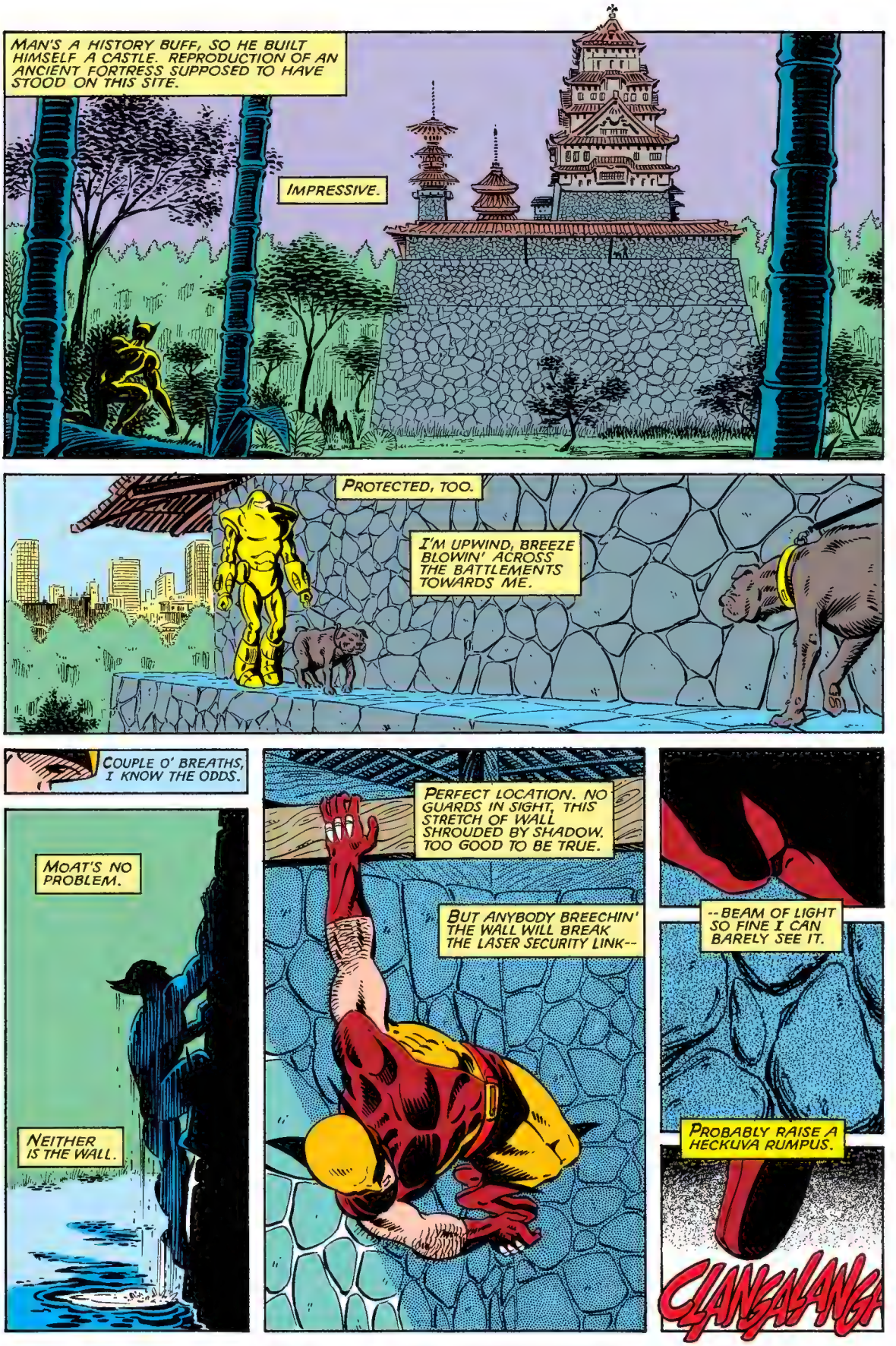
SPECIAL BONUS: *The Best of Marvel* (1987) was sold by Sears and featured classic Marvel reprints plus this all-new Wolverine solo story.

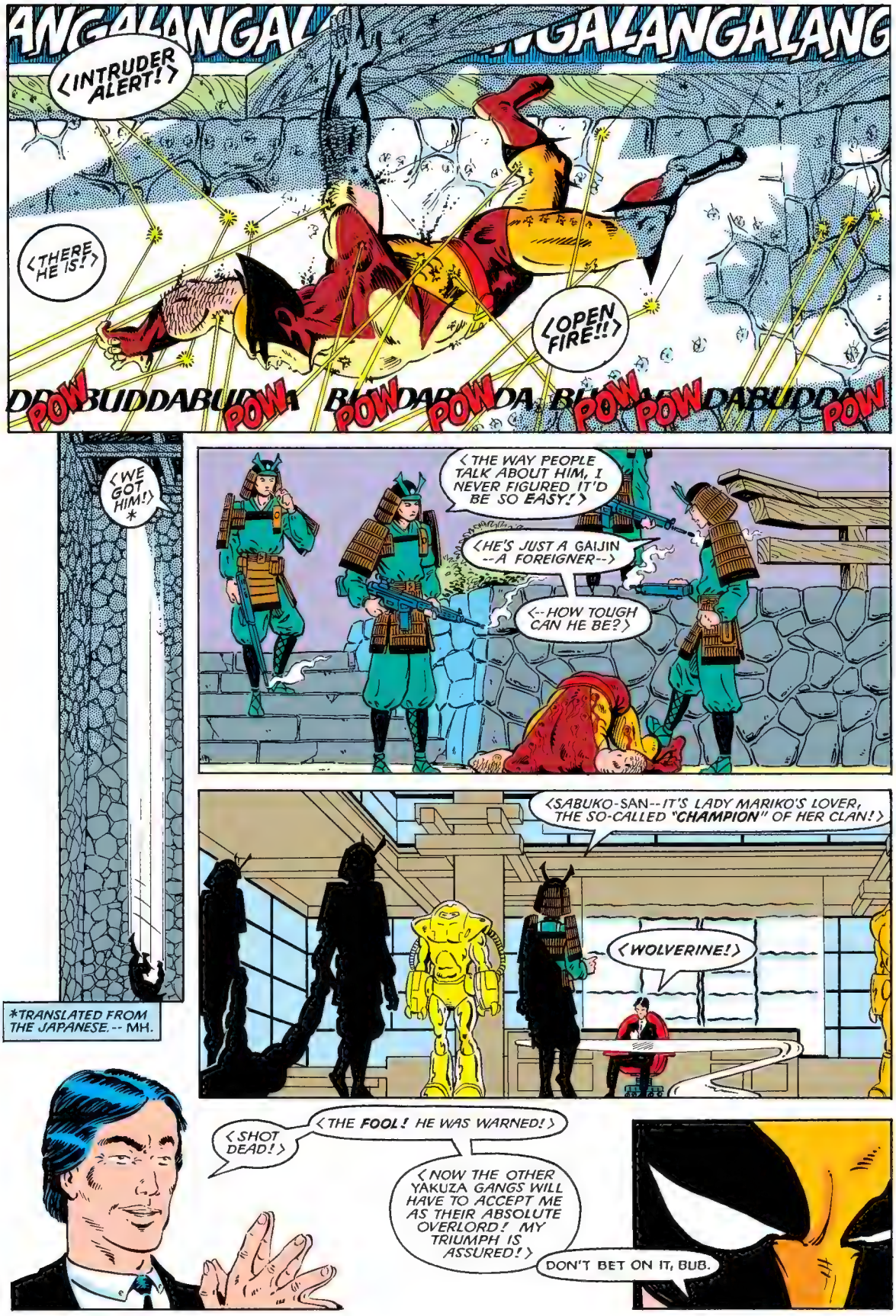

Stan Lee PRESENTS:
THE HUNTER
ALL MY LIFE, I'VE BEEN A HUNTER.
COMES AS NATURALLY TO ME AS BREATHIN'. AN', OCCASIONALLY, IT'S MORE FUN THAN A FIGHT.
TONIGHT, THOUGH, IT'S BUSINESS, NOT PLEASURE. SOMEONE'S KIDNAPED THE WOMAN I LOVE.
I AIM TO GET HER BACK.
AN ADVENTURE OF WOLVERINE
CHRIS CLAREMONT, writer
MARSHALL ROGERS, penciler
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, letterer
MICHAEL HIGGINS, editor
TOM DeFALCO, editor in chief
TOKYO.
CAPITOL OF JAPAN. PEOPLE SAY, HEIR TO NEW YORK'S TITLE AS DE FACTO CAPITOL OF THE WORLD.
I'M CANADIAN BY BIRTH. BUT THIS CITY, THIS COUNTRY, ARE MY ADOPTED HOME.

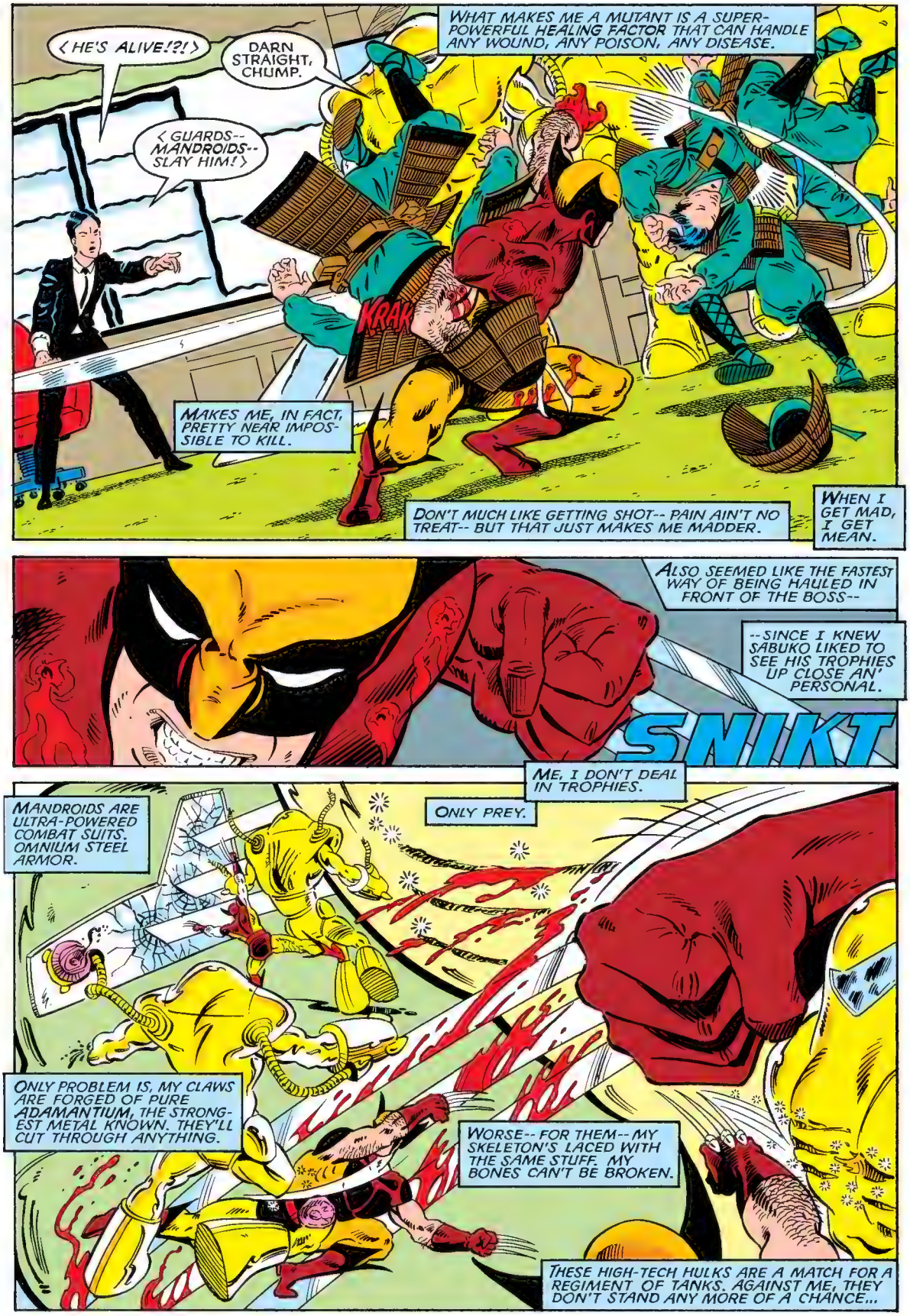
Inker: Randy Emberlin

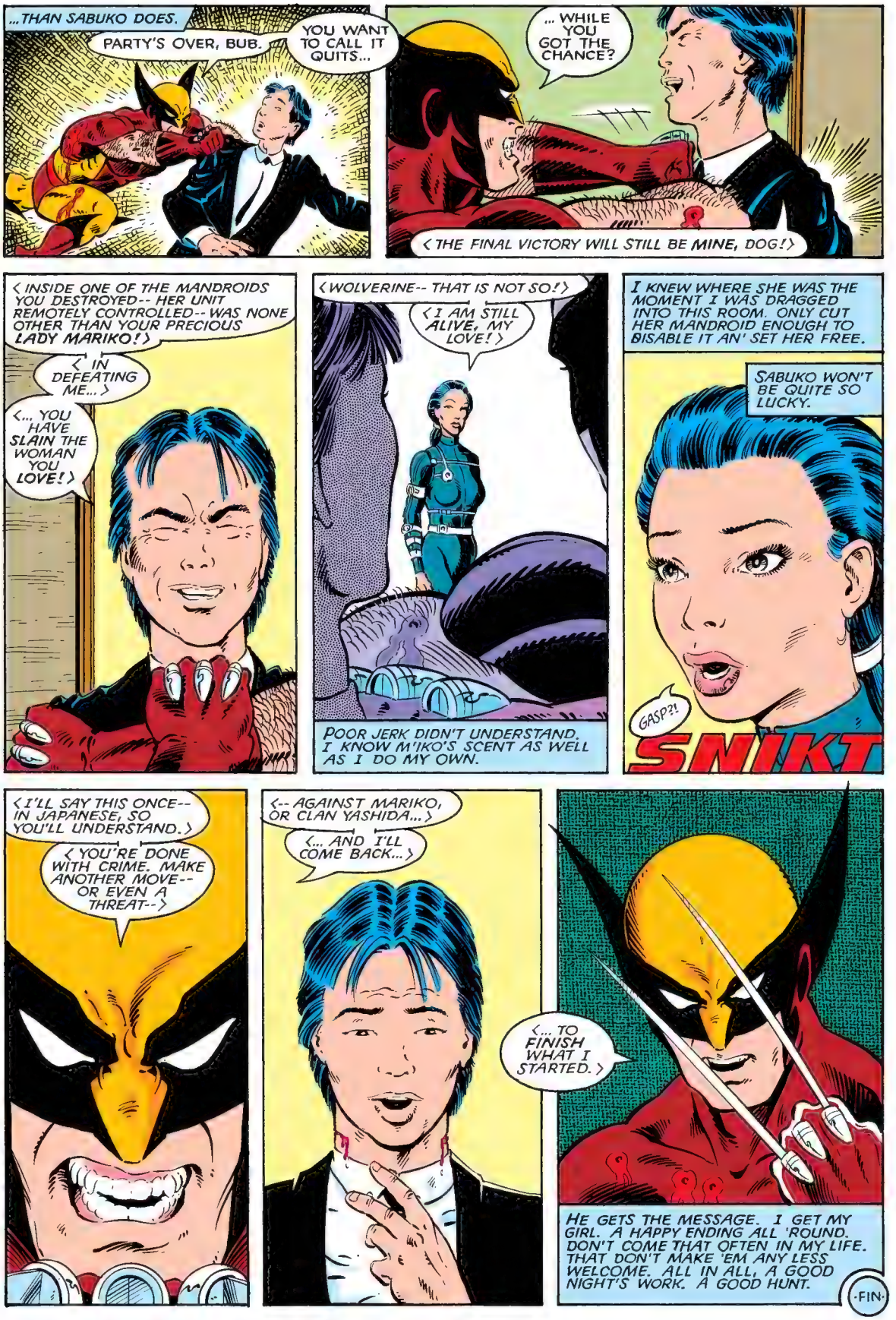
Color & Art Reconstruction: Logan Kelleher


NOTE SAID BRING THE RANSOM HERE, TO THIS LOWLIFE DISTRICT. I'D BE MET, PRESUMABLY BY THOSE TWO JOY-BOYS AN' A SMALL ARMY O' PALS.
DO AS I'M TOLD, NOBODY GETS HURT.
FAT FLAMIN' CHANCE, ON BOTH COUNTS.
YOU STEAL MY LADY...
... I'M NOT THE ONE WHO PAYS.
I DON'T NEED THEM TO FIND HER.
I'M A MUTANT. MORE THAN HUMAN. A BONAFIDE HERO, TOO, THAT'S WHY THE FANCY OUTFIT. PART OF MY POWER IS EXCEPTIONALLY ACUTE PHYSICAL SENSES, KEENER THAN ANY ANIMAL'S.
MEANS I CAN FOLLOW ANY TRAIL, NO MATTER HOW OLD, OR HOW FAINT.
AIN'T ALWAYS EASY, 'SPECIALLY IN A TOWN AS BIG AN' CROWDED AS THIS.
BUT, EVENTUALLY, I GET THE JOB DONE.
AN ESTATE, ON THE FRINGES OF THE CITY. I KNOW THE PLACE, AN' THE OWNER-- MAINLINE TYCOON WITH MORE THAN A FEW CONNECTIONS TO THE YAKUZA, THE JAPANESE UNDERWORLD.

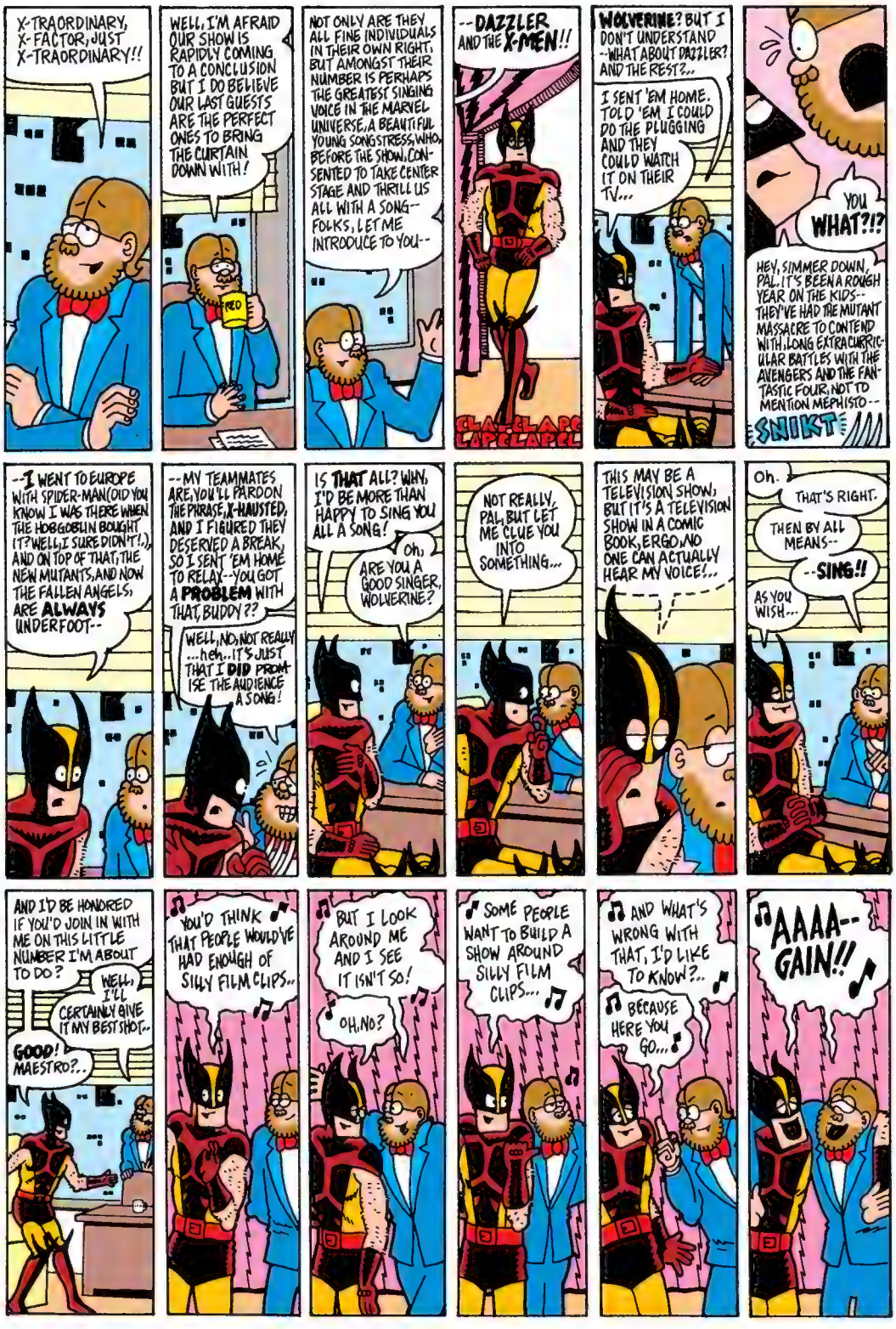

MAN'S A HISTORY BUFF, SO HE BUILT HIMSELF A CASTLE. REPRODUCTION OF AN ANCIENT FORTRESS SUPPOSED TO HAVE STOOD ON THIS SITE.
IMPRESSIVE.
PROTECTED, TOO.
I'M UPWIND, BREEZE BLOWIN' ACROSS THE BATTLEMENTS TOWARDS ME.
COUPLE O' BREATHS, I KNOW THE ODDS.
MOAT'S NO PROBLEM.
NEITHER IS THE WALL.
PERFECT LOCATION. NO GUARDS IN SIGHT, THIS STRETCH OF WALL SHROUDED BY SHADOW. TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.
BUT ANYBODY BREECHIN' THE WALL WILL BREAK THE LASER SECURITY LINK--
--BEAM OF LIGHT SO FINE I CAN BARELY SEE IT.
PROBABLY RAISE A HECKUVA RUMPUS.
CLANGALANG


ANGALANGAL
GALANGALANG
〈INTRUDER ALERT!〉
〈THERE HE IS!〉
〈OPEN FIRE!!〉
POW
BUDDABUD
POW
POW
POW
POW
POW
POW
〈WE GOT HIM!〉 *
〈THE WAY PEOPLE TALK ABOUT HIM, I NEVER FIGURED IT'D BE SO EASY!〉
〈HE'S JUST A GAIJIN --A FOREIGNER--〉
〈--HOW TOUGH CAN HE BE?〉
〈SABUKO-SAN--IT'S LADY MARIKO'S LOVER, THE SO-CALLED "CHAMPION" OF HER CLAN!〉
〈WOLVERINE!〉
*TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE.-- MH.
〈SHOT DEAD!〉
〈THE FOOL! HE WAS WARNED!〉
〈NOW THE OTHER YAKUZA GANGS WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT ME AS THEIR ABSOLUTE OVERLORD! MY TRIUMPH IS ASSURED!〉
DON'T BET ON IT, BUB.


WHAT MAKES ME A MUTANT IS A SUPER-POWERFUL HEALING FACTOR THAT CAN HANDLE ANY WOUND, ANY POISON, ANY DISEASE.
<HE'S ALIVE!?!>
DARN STRAIGHT, CHUMP.
<GUARDS-- MANDROIDS-- SLAY HIM!>
KRAK
MAKES ME, IN FACT, PRETTY NEAR IMPOSSIBLE TO KILL.
DON'T MUCH LIKE GETTING SHOT-- PAIN AIN'T NO TREAT-- BUT THAT JUST MAKES ME MADDER.
WHEN I GET MAD, I GET MEAN.
ALSO SEEMED LIKE THE FASTEST WAY OF BEING HAULED IN FRONT OF THE BOSS--
--SINCE I KNEW SABUKO LIKED TO SEE HIS TROPHIES UP CLOSE AN' PERSONAL.
SNIKT
ME, I DON'T DEAL IN TROPHIES.
ONLY PREY.
MANDROIDS ARE ULTRA-POWERED COMBAT SUITS. OMNIUM STEEL ARMOR.
ONLY PROBLEM IS, MY CLAWS ARE FORGED OF PURE ADAMANTIUM, THE STRONGEST METAL KNOWN. THEY'LL CUT THROUGH ANYTHING.
WORSE-- FOR THEM-- MY SKELETON'S LACED WITH THE SAME STUFF. MY BONES CAN'T BE BROKEN.
THESE HIGH-TECH HULKS ARE A MATCH FOR A REGIMENT OF TANKS. AGAINST ME, THEY DON'T STAND ANY MORE OF A CHANCE...


...THAN SABUKO DOES.
PARTY'S OVER, BUB.
YOU WANT TO CALL IT QUITS...
... WHILE YOU GOT THE CHANCE?
〈THE FINAL VICTORY WILL STILL BE MINE, DOG!〉
〈INSIDE ONE OF THE MANDROIDS YOU DESTROYED-- HER UNIT REMOTELY CONTROLLED-- WAS NONE OTHER THAN YOUR PRECIOUS LADY MARIKO!〉
〈IN DEFEATING ME...〉
〈... YOU HAVE SLAIN THE WOMAN YOU LOVE!〉
〈WOLVERINE-- THAT IS NOT SO!〉
〈I AM STILL ALIVE, MY LOVE!〉
POOR JERK DIDN'T UNDERSTAND. I KNOW M'IKO'S SCENT AS WELL AS I DO MY OWN.
I KNEW WHERE SHE WAS THE MOMENT I WAS DRAGGED INTO THIS ROOM. ONLY CUT HER MANDROID ENOUGH TO DISABLE IT AN' SET HER FREE.
SABUKO WON'T BE QUITE SO LUCKY.
GASP?!
SNIKT
〈I'LL SAY THIS ONCE-- IN JAPANESE, SO YOU'LL UNDERSTAND.〉
〈YOU'RE DONE WITH CRIME. MAKE ANOTHER MOVE-- OR EVEN A THREAT--〉
〈-- AGAINST MARIKO, OR CLAN YASHIDA...〉
〈... AND I'LL COME BACK...〉
〈... TO FINISH WHAT I STARTED.〉
HE GETS THE MESSAGE. I GET MY GIRL. A HAPPY ENDING ALL 'ROUND. DON'T COME THAT OFTEN IN MY LIFE. THAT DON'T MAKE 'EM ANY LESS WELCOME. ALL IN ALL, A GOOD NIGHT'S WORK. A GOOD HUNT.
-FIN-

Marvel Age Annual #3 (1987) promoted upcoming storylines, pairing one-pagers by each series' creative team with Fred Hembeck's "When Titans Plug!" segments.


X-TRAORDINARY, X-FACTOR, JUST X-TRAORDINARY!!
WELL, I'M AFRAID OUR SHOW IS RAPIDLY COMING TO A CONCLUSION BUT I DO BELIEVE OUR LAST GUESTS ARE THE PERFECT ONES TO BRING THE CURTAIN DOWN WITH!
FRED
NOT ONLY ARE THEY ALL FINE INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT, BUT AMONGST THEIR NUMBER IS PERHAPS THE GREATEST SINGING VOICE IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE, A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG SONGSTRESS, WHO, BEFORE THE SHOW, CONSENTED TO TAKE CENTER STAGE AND THRILL US ALL WITH A SONG-- FOLKS, LET ME INTRODUCE TO YOU--
--DAZZLER AND THE X-MEN!!
CLAP-CLAP-CLAP-CLAP-CLAP
WOLVERINE? BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND --WHAT ABOUT DAZZLER? AND THE REST?..
I SENT 'EM HOME. TOLD 'EM I COULD DO THE PLUGGING AND THEY COULD WATCH IT ON THEIR TV...
YOU WHAT?!?
HEY, SIMMER DOWN, PAL. IT'S BEEN A ROUGH YEAR ON THE KIDS-- THEY'VE HAD THE MUTANT MASSACRE TO CONTEND WITH, LONG EXTRACURRICULAR BATTLES WITH THE AVENGERS AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR, NOT TO MENTION MEPHISTO--
SNIKT
--I WENT TO EUROPE WITH SPIDER-MAN (DID YOU KNOW I WAS THERE WHEN THE HOBGOBLIN BOUGHT IT? WELL, I SURE DIDN'T!..), AND ON TOP OF THAT, THE NEW MUTANTS, AND NOW THE FALLEN ANGELS, ARE ALWAYS UNDERFOOT--
--MY TEAMMATES ARE, YOU'LL PARDON THE PHRASE, X-HAUSTED, AND I FIGURED THEY DESERVED A BREAK, SO I SENT 'EM HOME TO RELAX--YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT, BUDDY??
WELL, NO, NOT REALLY ...heh.. IT'S JUST THAT I DID PROMISE THE AUDIENCE A SONG!
IS THAT ALL? WHY, I'D BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO SING YOU ALL A SONG!
OH, ARE YOU A GOOD SINGER, WOLVERINE?
NOT REALLY, PAL, BUT LET ME CLUE YOU INTO SOMETHING...
THIS MAY BE A TELEVISION SHOW, BUT IT'S A TELEVISION SHOW IN A COMIC BOOK, ERGO, NO ONE CAN ACTUALLY HEAR MY VOICE!...
OH.
THAT'S RIGHT.
THEN BY ALL MEANS--
--SING!!
AS YOU WISH...
AND I'D BE HONORED IF YOU'D JOIN IN WITH ME ON THIS LITTLE NUMBER I'M ABOUT TO DO?
WELL, I'LL CERTAINLY GIVE IT MY BEST SHOT..
GOOD! MAESTRO?..
YOU'D THINK THAT PEOPLE WOULD'VE HAD ENOUGH OF SILLY FILM CLIPS..
BUT I LOOK AROUND ME AND I SEE IT ISN'T SO!
OH, NO?
SOME PEOPLE WANT TO BUILD A SHOW AROUND SILLY FILM CLIPS...
AND WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT, I'D LIKE TO KNOW?..
BECAUSE HERE YOU GO...
AAAA--GAIN!!

The Uncanny X-Men and *New Mutants* segment by Chris Claremont & Marc Silvestri highlights the X-Men's apparent deaths and foreshadows Excalibur's debut.

X-MEN
THE NEW MUTANTS
THE SCHOOL IS SILENT.
NO VOICES STIR THE AIR, NO FEET CLATTER ON STAIRS--THE VENERABLE HUDSON VALLEY MANSION THAT HOUSES PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS IS GRIPPED WITH A SUPERNAL, SURREAL STILLNESS, A MOOD DIRECTLY AT ODDS WITH THE GLORY OF THE DAY--
--SO MUCH SO, ONE MIGHT ALMOST THINK IT DESERTED.
THAT WOULD BE WRONG.
I'M THE TEAM'S WAR CHIEF.
I TELL MYSELF, I DID MY BEST. THAT THESE THINGS HAPPEN. IT ISN'T MY FAULT.
IT DOESN'T MATTER. I'M RESPONSIBLE. I SHOULD HAVE FOUND A WAY.
THE OTHERS MAY FORGIVE ME, I DON'T THINK I EVER WILL MYSELF.
YOU OKAY, ILLYANA?
ARE ANY OF US, SAM?
I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT VENGEANCE--
-- AND HOW NICE IT'LL BE TO SETTLE OLD SCORES, BLOOD FOR BLOOD...
...LIFE FOR LIFE.
AN OCEAN TO THE EAST, ON MUIR ISLE, THE MOOD IS NO LESS BLEAK...
...AS KITTY PRYDE STARES INTO THE SETTING SUN AND WISHES THAT HER HEART COULD TRULY BREAK.
BETTER ETERNAL OBLIVION...
...THAN THIS AWFUL, RAVENING HOLLOWNESS WITHIN HER BREAST.
IT ISN'T FAIR, NIGHTCRAWLER!
AFTER ALL THE X-MEN HAVE DONE-- TO HAVE THINGS END LIKE THIS, IT'S MORE THAN I CAN BEAR!
BUT BEAR THIS LOSS WE SHALL, SHADOWCAT.
BECAUSE TO BREAK WOULD BE TO GIVE OUR ENEMIES THE FINAL VICTORY--
--AND THAT, I SHALL NEVER DO!
WRITER: CHRIS CLAREMONT ★ PENCILER: MARC SILVESTRI ★ INKER: TERRY AUSTIN

Marvel Fanfare #35 (November 1987) Nightcrawler pinup
by Craig Hamilton

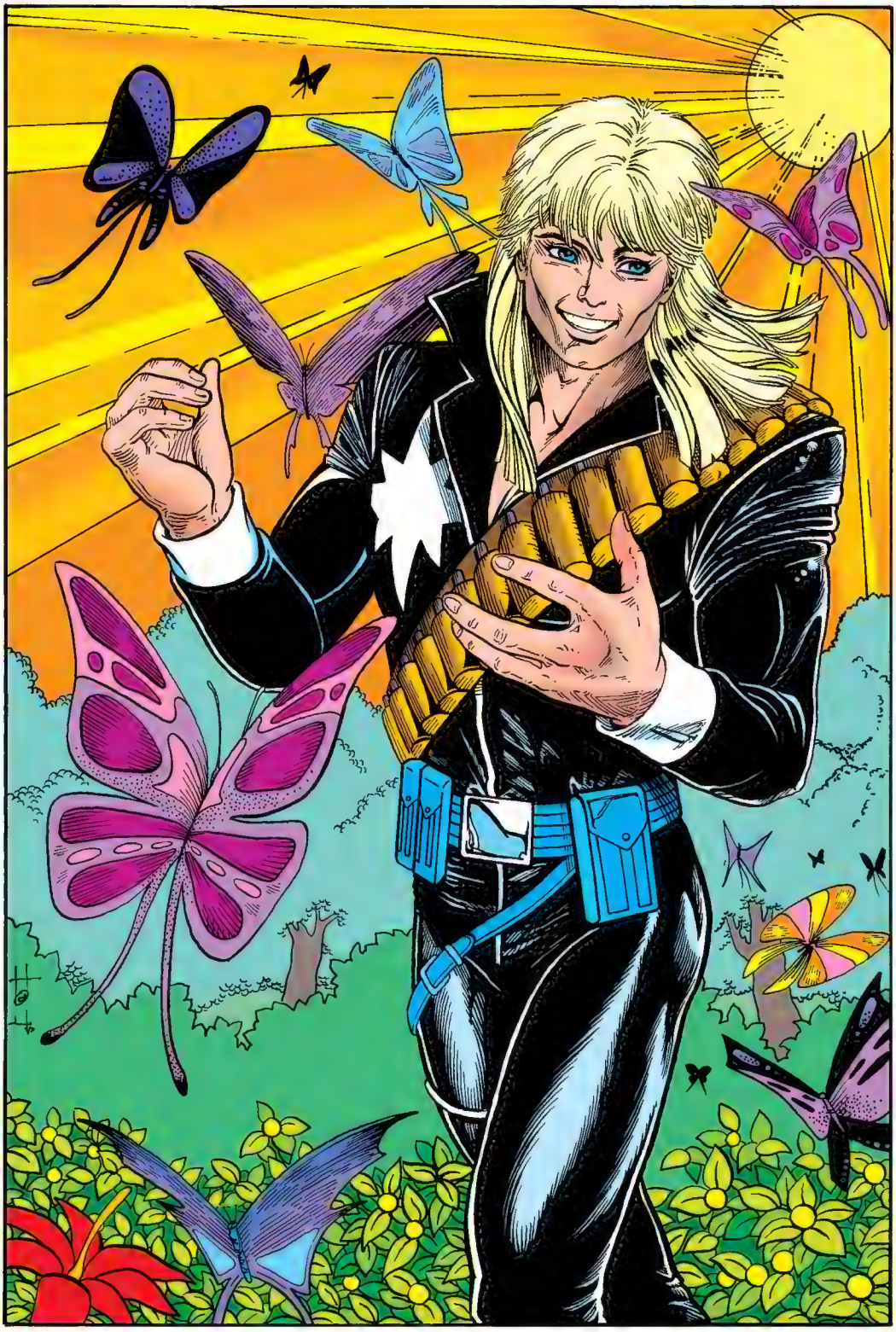
Marvel Fanfare #35 (November 1987) Dark Phoenix pinup
by Craig Hamilton

Marvel Fanfare #35 (November 1987) Colossus pinup
by Craig Hamilton

Marvel Fanfare #35 (November 1987) Kitty Pryde and Lockheed pinup
by Craig Hamilton

Marvel Fanfare #37 (March 1988) Storm pinup
by Bret Blevins

Marvel Fanfare #38 (June 1988) Longshot pinup
by Colleen Doran

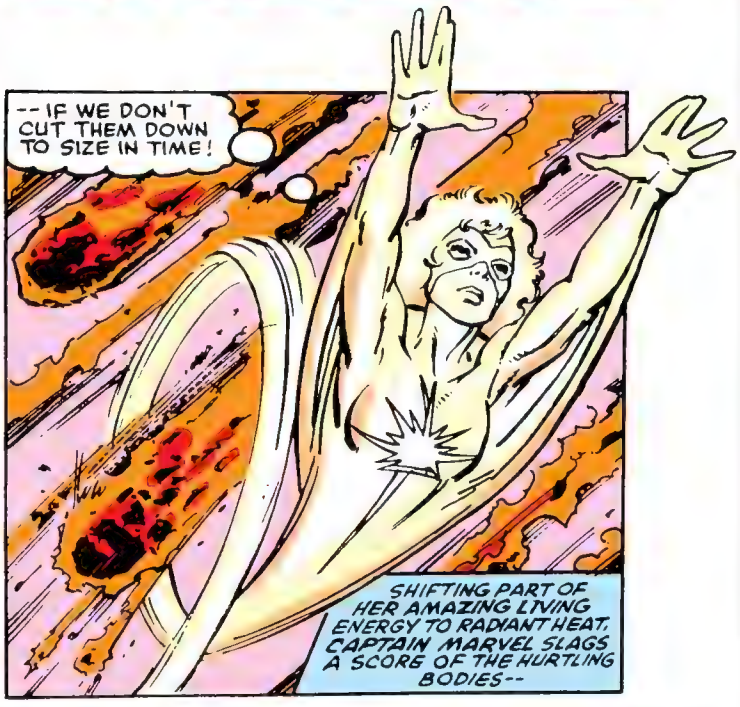


Marvel Age #48 (March 1987) featured a cover by Kerry Gammill as well as a three-page article on *The X-Men vs. The Avengers* miniseries.

X-TRA THE MUTANT REPORT X-TRA

VOLUME 2 "THE NEXT STEP IN NEWS EVOLUTION" NUMBER 7

THE X-MEN VS. THE AVENGERS™


--IF WE DON'T CUT THEM DOWN TO SIZE IN TIME!
SHIFTING PART OF HER AMAZING LIVING ENERGY TO RADIANT HEAT, CAPTAIN MARVEL SLAGS A SCORE OF THE HURTLING BODIES--

Asteroid M is a part of Magneto's former existence, a base of operations far above the Earth, from the Master of Magnetism's days as a world conqueror. Now he is the headmaster of Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters, an ally of the X-Men, and the mentor of the New Mutants. And now Magneto's past is coming back to haunt—and possibly destroy—him in THE X-MEN VS. THE AVENGERS, a four-issue Limited Series which brings Earth's mightiest heroes face-to-face with the mutant controversy, and where the governments of two world powers conspire to bring a fugitive to justice any way possible. Magneto will appear before the International Court of Justice to finish his trial. And the X-Men will reach a turning point of sorts in the way they view themselves that will lead to major developments in THE X-MEN series over the next year.

Written by Roger Stern and illustrated by Marc Silvestri and Joe Rubinstein, THE X-MEN VS. THE AVENGERS also features the incredible Soviet Super-Soldiers.

The story begins in outer space where Magneto's old headquarters, Asteroid M, is rapidly falling toward Earth as its orbit deteriorates. .When Asteroid M hits the atmosphere it fragments, raining large chunks down upon the planet. One such fragment plummets toward Ohio and the Avengers are called in to save the state from major disaster. In the process, Magneto learns of the situation.

"Asteroid M is full of all manner of dangerous and useful items, that should not be allowed to fall into the wrong hands," explains Magneto. But Woverine is worried that perhaps his former-enemy-turned-ally is only interested in having these items in his own hands once again for some unknown, and possibly sinister purpose.

Meanwhile, the United States government analyzes the falling satellite's trajectory and determines that another large fragment will fall somewhere in Southeast Asia and that the falling space debris are the remains of Magneto's one-time base of operations. In an elaborate plot to finally deal with the mutant fugitive, the U.S. leaks the information to the Soviet Union in hopes that they will set a trap for the master of magnetism if he decides to try to recover the wreckage.

The Soviets are more than happy to oblige the United States. After all, Magneto once destroyed one of their submarines in an awesome display of power designed to humble the super-powered nation. They have waited a long time to repay Magneto for his generous show of strength.

Magneto goes alone to recover the Southeast Asian remains of Asteroid M and falls right into the Soviets' waiting hands. But will the X-Men and the Avengers stay out of something this big and important? Just try to stop them!

The anti-mutant hysteria that has reached a terrifying peak recently will finally be confronted by the Avengers. They have battled against and alongside the X-Men over the years, never quite sure what to make of the strange group of super-powered individuals. But Magneto is clearly a villain and a fugitive from justice in their eyes. Thus in Magneto's case, the Avengers are certain of their duty. As Captain America explains, "Magneto must be brought in to stand trial." He cheated the World Court of a decision last time (in X-MEN #200) and that is a situation the Avengers want to rectify.

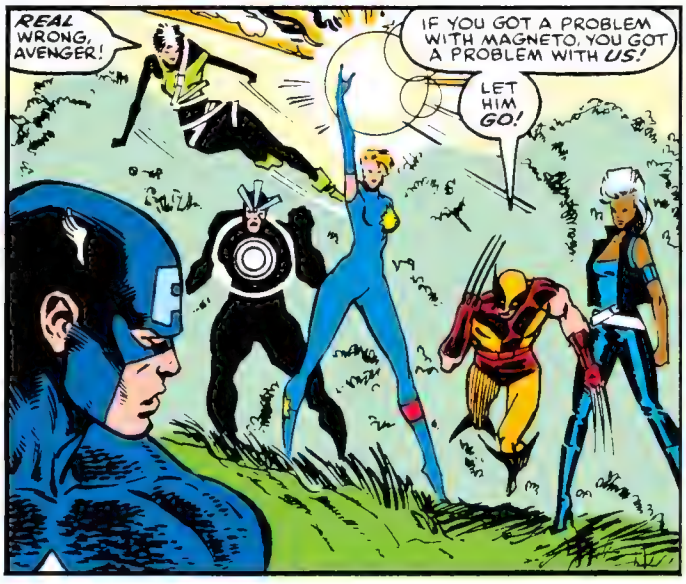
But the Soviets are determined to bring Magneto to justice in their own way. And their way doesn't include anything as formal as a World Court verdict. Instead, they unleash the Soviet Super-Soldiers! Darkstar, Vanguard, Ursa Major, Titanium Man, and the Crimson Dynamo! This mighty force starts out following orders to destroy the fugitive mutant, but winds up locked in a major confrontation with the Avengers!

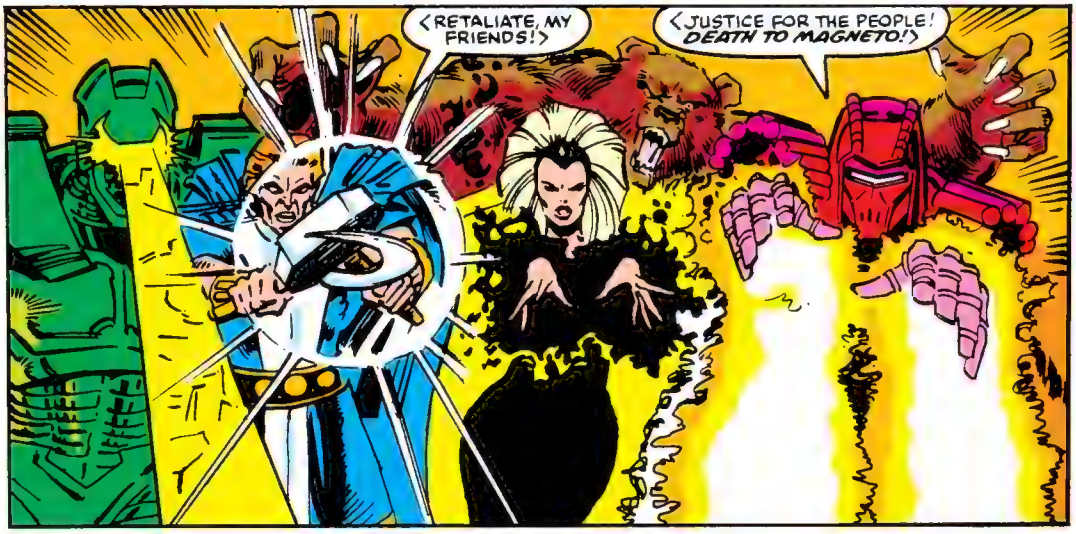
Meanwhile, the X-Men go against Magneto's wishes and arrive in Southeast Asia to find out just what is going on. When they discover the Super-Soldiers and the Avengers are involved, their priority becomes getting Magneto out of there and sorting out the pieces later. Storm, Wolverine, Rogue, Dazzler, and Havok take on Captain America, Captain Marvel, Thor, She-Hulk, and Dr. Druid (the newest Avenger). And the Soviet Super-Soldiers are waiting around to mix it up with the winners!

"Look at all this from the Avengers' point of view," said writer Roger Stern. "The X-Men are harboring one of the most notorious known villains of the last quarter century. Magneto has subjugated nations, tortured individuals, sabotaged government facilities. He has been involved in numerous crimes that are on the public record, and they guess that he has been involved in many more that aren't. He's even battled the Avengers on more than one occasion! The Avengers may have tempered their thinking on the matter. They may even believe that he has changed. But that doesn't excuse the actions of his past. During the course of the series the X-Men themselves will come to the realization that they too must question their relationship with—and allegiance to—Magneto."

What is it like writing a series that features not one, not two, but three super teams? "Zoo time," explained Roger. "It's like walking a high wire while balancing a couple of boards and a lot of people. But it's exciting and I'm having a ball. I'm writing characters I've never written before. I have had some hands-on experience with the X-Men, but that was a long time ago when I was editing the book. There are some new members on the team since I was editor."

Roger is using this as a theme of the story, sort of expressing the idea through Havok's eyes. "Havok and I have something in common," said Roger. "When we were with the X-Men last it was an entirely different team. Cyclops was the leader and Magneto was the





enemy. Now Havok has to adjust to the newcomers and the changes, and so do I."

"Havok is almost a surrogate for me in the series," Roger said. "He has problems relating to this new group of X-Men. They're a different group since my days on the book. Once they were sort of considered a group of super heroes, almost a loosely knit gang of Spider-Men, who would show up, save the day, and disappear. Now they are feared, and people are even more worried because they associate with Magneto, a known super-villain. It's an extra cross that they have to bear. Another funny thing is that this is the first time I'm getting to write Dazzler, and I named her way back when!"

Another interesting personal dilemma that Roger will integrate into the storyline is the feelings that are nagging at Storm. Ever since she lost her powers she has been trying to cope as best she could. But here she will meet Thor, a hero who can call down and control the very storms she used to wield. And Captain Marvel can actually become lightning. These heroes will serve as painful reminders to Storm of her lost abilities and will offer new insights into her character and those of the Avengers.

Marc Silvestri and Joe Rubinstein have teamed up to produce some exciting and powerful art for the four-issue Limited Series. "It's beautiful stuff." said Roger "They say that Marc is an up-and-comer as far as art is concerned, but this is it. He has arrived with THE X-MEN VS. THE AVENGERS." It looks real nice. And he draws K-Marts better than anyone!"

The Avengers and the X-Men aren't the only ones doing some major soul-searching in the series. The Soviet Super-Soldiers have some problems and moral considerations of their own to address. For one thing, four members of the team are mutants themselves. Darkstar, Ursa Major, Vanguard, and Gremlin are all children of the atom. They are none too pleased with the treatment mutants have been undergoing in the Soviet Union in recent years. It is even worse than the anti-mutant hysteria in the United States. Add to this the fact that one of their teammates—the Crimson Dynamo—is a KGB spy assigned to assure their loyalty, and you've got some major inner strife brewing.

The mutant controversy is reaching a point now where it's starting to affect even such groups as the Avengers. The Avengers have had mutant members at various times over the years, and they have fought against evil mutants as well. "What's the difference between a hero who receives his powers from a radioactive spider and a hero who is born with a genetic ability?" said Roger. "Does it make a difference? Should it make a difference? It's this irrational fear of mutants that the Avengers want to address. After all, it could escalate to include anyone who wears a costume or displays a superpower. It's like hating left-handed people—it's the worse kind of paranoid bigotry."

But the deep issues are only a part of the story. Another part is the characters, and Roger has his favorites in each group.

"In the X-Men, I enjoyed writing Wolverine and Havok best," explained Roger. "In the Super-Soldiers I really liked writing Titanium Man and, in a weird sort of way, Ursa Major. He's a big bear guy who reminds me of an old Arte Johnson routine. And in the Avengers, the two captains—Marvel and America—and She-Hulk are the most fun. I guess I also like the Avengers best as a whole. They are the most together bunch of heroes around. They known who they are and they're organized and full of purpose. The X-Men have an ambiguity about them. They're very confused, through no fault of their own. The world misunderstands them and while we can empathize with that, there's just something more powerful in the Avengers' confidence.

While I might want to be Wolverine if I were in a tough spot, Captain America is always going to be my favorite character," he said.

If it sounds like THE X-MEN VS. THE AVENGERS is going to be a major milestone in the Marvel Universe, you're right!

—William Slavicsek

The X-Men vs. The Avengers unused cover featured in *Marvel Age* #51 (June 1987)
by Marc Silvestri & Art Nichols

This first draft synopsis of *The X-Men vs. The Avengers* miniseries by Roger Stern comes from the files of series co-editor Mark Gruenwald and features Gruenwald's editorial notes in the margins.

AVENGERS VS. THE X-MEN Limited Series / Roger Stern / 1

Issue #1

We open with the X-Men [Rogue, Havok, Wolverine, Dazzler, and Storm] meeting secretly in Singapore with Magneto. Magneto briefly outlines the situation: he's traced chunks of his old asteroid headquarters to three impact sites in the Southeast Asia/Australia area. Magneto tells the X-Men there could be dangerous stuff in those chunks, and he needs their help to find out if that's the case and take appropriate action. The meeting is observed by CIA agents. As the agents are transmitting their report, they're ambushed by a second group of spies. [These are presumably KGB agents, but at least some are in the service of the Mandarin.]

Cut to an Air Force jet being escorted down to a landing at the Avengers' new Hydrobase headquarters by Thor & Captain Marvel. An intelligence officer briefs the Avengers [Captain America, Captain Marvel, the Black Knight, She-Hulk, Thor, and Doctor Druid] on the X-Men/Magneto connection. There's division and in-fighting among the U.S. intelligence community, but a consensus of factions wants to see Magneto apprehended and returned to the World Court for trial (in hopes of easing anti-mutant hysteria). However, CIA knows that the Soviets undoubtedly have the same information on Magneto's whereabouts that they have...and the Soviets understandably want Magneto dead. The catch is that neither the U.S. nor the Soviets know at which one of three possible locations Magneto might be. U.S. intelligence is asking the Avengers to find and apprehend Magneto before the Soviets track him down and kill him.

Cut to a remote section of Sibera, where the Crimson Dynamo rockets through a raging blizzard. The Dynamo is shot down by a blast of black energy...he crashes. As the Dynamo struggles to get to his feet, he finds himself surrounded by the Soviet Super Soldiers [Darkstar, Vanguard, Ursa Major, and the Gremlin]...they're not happy to see him. Dynamo kowtows a little, says he knows they have an uneasy truce with the State, but appeals to them to help "in the apprehension of the terrorist-murderer Magneto!"

Cut to Wolverine & Dazzler stalking through the jungles of Kampuchea. They've been searching for days for the impact site of one of the chunks of Magneto's asteroid. Wolverine picks up a scent and goes on ahead to check it out...as he closes in on the scent, its source seems to vanish...then it's behind him. It's Captain Marvel turning from energy to physical and back again to lure him away from Dazzler, who is being stalked by Doctor Druid. Battle erupts between the two mutants and the two Avengers...Avengers k.o. the mutants. Captain Marvel and Doctor Druid have the two X-Men bound, and are bringing them around to consciousness for questioning, when Druid senses the approach of others. He goes off to investigate...but is swiftly sent flying. And the Avengers and mutants are swiftly surrounded by a squad of elite Kampuchean army regulars led by Darkstar and Vanguard, declaring them all under arrest as enemies of the state.

Issue #2

An Avengers Quinjet streaks high over the island...aboard are Black Knight, Captain America, Thor, & She-Hulk. They confer on their missions, filling in on how Captain Marvel and Doctor Druid slipped into Kampuchea to check out one of the squads of X-Men, looking for Magneto. The decision has been made as to who is checking out what. Thor and the Black Knight (on his atomic steed) take off for a possible location in Australia...Cap & the She-Hulk descend in the quinjet into the wilderness of Java.

The Crimson Dynamo & Major Ursus are already searching in the area, and the Dynamo gets a fix on the quinjet. The Dynamo relays word of this to Gremlin,

[continued]

thin line between fighting teams. A-thought good methods bad. loyalty to team/individual bonds w/ enemies?

Bylock longshot?

one on each team switch sides?

what's Mandarin want?

Why want Asgard?

Take out Mandarin

Someone using ISSUE to get rid of Magneto. Personal vendetta turned Political

What's X-M's crime? Compliance story no Konstantin at UN

Mags wife? Mother of vis/witch

Courtesy Tom Brevoort

Issue #2...Continued

who is manning a distant communications center. Gremlin communicates with Vanguard & Darkstar, who have situation under control in Kampuchea with Wolverine and the Dazzler, as well as Avengers Captain Marvel and Doctor Druid, their prisoners (or so they think). No sooner has Vanguard broken contact with the Gremlin, than there's a major dust-up with the two Avengers.

Wolverine and Dazzler manage to escape...they finally locate their chunk of Magneto's asteroid. But no sooner do they find the thing than they and the asteroid fragment vanish! (Actually, they're spirited away by the Mandarin, who is a secret mastermind behind the scenes.)

Meanwhile, in jungles of Java, Cap & She-Hulk get caught up in battle with Storm & Rogue...and with the Crimson Dynamo & Major Ursus...at the second asteroid impact site. Once again, fragment & mutants mysteriously vanish.

Issue #3

On the great sandy desert of Australia, Havok and Magneto are in the process of unearthing the last of the asteroid fragments (a BIG chunk, complete with part of Magneto's old orbital headquarters)...when Thor and the Black Knight close in on them. Big battle erupts.

Meanwhile, the Gremlin knows that something is very wrong. The mutant X-Men have been mysteriously vanishing, and he is certain that someone's been capturing them via some form of teleportation. He communicates his suspicions to his Super-Soldiers, and through them to the Avengers.

Back in the desert, Thor goes one-on-one against Magneto in pitched battle...a real knock-down, drag-out fight between Thor & the "World's Most Powerful Super-Villain!" Much to Thor's surprise, the Titanium Man shows up...and assists Magneto against Thor. While Thor is temporarily at a disadvantage, Titanium Man suddenly turns on Magneto and knocks him out. Then, Titanium Man, Magneto and the final asteroid fragment all vanish.

Avengers and Super-Soldiers regroup, discovering through Gremlin's help that the Mandarin is behind all this. And if Mandarin wanted the mutants and Magneto's stuff that badly, it can't be for any good purpose...they have to go into China and settle this!

Issue #4

Mandarin has the X-Men helpless...basically holding them hostage to convince Magneto to throw in with him. (Mandarin has assembled some truly world shaking devices from the remains of Magneto's old headquarters, but he needs Magneto to make them work effectively.) Magneto reluctantly agrees.

The Avengers (with some help from the Super-Soldiers) launch an attack against the Mandarin's fortress stronghold. Mandarin throws the kitchen sink at them...besides the Titanium Man, the Crimson Dynamo is also secretly in his employ...and he has the X-Men mesmerized (by the power of his rings) as well.

The Avengers make mincemeat of the stuff the Mandarin throws at them in a BIG DEAL of a battle. Magneto takes advantage of this to release the X-Men from the Mandarin's hold, and start turning the tables on the Mandarin. But, from the looks of things, Magneto could be intending to use the equipment (which he was so hot to recover, remember) to do a little world shaking himself. Any such intent on Magneto's part is thwarted by a counter-attack of the Mandarin, amid all the confusion of the battling Avengers and X-Men.

[continued]

Issue #4...Continued

Mandarin & Magneto apparently perish in an explosion which levels the Mandarin's fortress. Avengers (with Super-Soldiers) and X-Men are left declaring a truce. Avengers are able to point out that Magneto was apparently going to use his equipment to do bad nastiness...X-Men stand up for Magneto, but privately they have many worrying doubts. After the Soviets depart, the Avengers also express doubts that Magneto & Mandarin actually perished (Mandarin had used teleportation, after all)...Avengers tell the X-Men that if Magneto does live, and if they ever get wind that he's operating with them, they'll come after the X-Men again! Cap and the others are determined to see to it that a fugitive from justice such as Magneto go to trial and --if found guilty -- pay for his crimes! They hammer home the point to the X-Men that until Magneto faces justice, there is little chance of ever ending the world's anti-mutant hysteria!

- end -

Mag goes after Astroid doesn't tell X-Men.

Magneto proves self?

What are we saying a Magneto?

~~Does~~ How does this change the man?

INSET: Notes from the reverse side of synopsis page three, by Mark Gruenwald

Never shy about quality research, in preparation for *The X-Men vs. The Avengers*, Roger Stern laid out the history of Magneto's crimes, dating back to *The X-Men* #1.

THE CRIMES OF MAGNETO

X-MEN #1...Sabotage and destruction of U.S. property (guided missile)
Attack and reckless endangerment of a dozen U.S. soldiers
Threatening a U.S. military installation
Theft and destruction of U.S. property (missiles)
The taking by force of a U.S. military installation and the imprisonment of its personel
Use of deadly force against the X-Men

X-MEN #4...Theft of a freighter
Shelling of the nation of Santo Marcos
Overthrow of the rightful government of Santo Marcos
Torture of political prisoners
Use of deadly force against the X-Men
Attempted use of a nuclear bomb "capable of blowing up the entire nation" of Santo Marcos

X-MEN #5...Kidnapping, imprisonment, and torture of the Angel
Use of deadly force against the X-Men
Attempted murder of the X-Men (through exposure to vacuum of space)
Specific attempted murder of Cyclops

X-MEN #6...Use of deadly force against the X-Men
Use of deadly force against the Sub-Mariner

X-MEN #7...Use of deadly force against the X-Men

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY (THOR) #109...
Reckless endangerment of the life of the citizens of New York City
Use of Deadly force against Thor/Don Blake
Attempted detonation of a thermonuclear proton bomb within New York harbor

X-MEN #17...Use of deadly force against the Angel
Attempted murder of Angel, Cyclops, Beast, Marvel Girl, and Professor X

X-MEN #18...Attempted murder of Iceman

AVENGERS #47...Forceful assault of Quicksilver, Scarlet Witch, and Norris (a technician)

AVENGERS #48...Imprisonment of Quicksilver and Scarlet Witch
Forceful assault of Quicksilver

AVENGERS #49...Forceful assault of a police officer
Unlawful entry at United Nations
Attempted assault of a U.N. delegate
Use of deadly force against the Scarlet Witch

X-MEN #43...Wrecking of a cargo ship and theft of its cargo
Use of deadly force against the X-Men

[more]

Courtesy Tom Brevoort

THE CRIMES OF MAGNETO (continued)

X-MEN #44...Imprisonment of the X-Men

AVENGERS #53...Mental subjugation of the X-Men for the purposes of attacking the Avengers

X-MEN #62...Subjugation and manipulation of Savage Land tribes

X-MEN #63...Sending deadly force against the X-Men and Ka-Zar

F.F. #102...Reckless endangerment of the human life in New York City
Use of deadly force against the Fantastic Four
Fomenting of war between Atlantis and the surface world

F.F. #103...General use of deadly force
Kidnapping Susan Richards and the Lady Dorma and holding them in life-threatening situations

F.F. #104...Armed attack of New York City
Armed occupation of New York City

AMAZING ADVENTURES #9...
Imprisonment and torture of Black Bolt
Use of deadly force against Gorgon and Medusa

AA #10.....Imprisonment of Gorgon, Medusa, and Karnak
Mental subjugation of Black Bolt
Breaking and entering/theft at U.S. installation
Murder of guards

AVENGERS #110...Use of deadly force against the Avengers
Capture/enslavement of the X-Men, Iron Man, Captain America, and the Scarlet Witch

AVENGERS #111...Mental subjugation the Scarlet Witch, Captain America, Iron Man, Cyclops, Marvel Girl, Iceman, Professor X, and several government officials
Use of deadly force against Daredevil
Attempt to exterminate 92% of Earth's population

DEFENDERS #15...Use of deadly force against Doctor Strange, Valkyrie, Nighthawk, the Hulk, and Professor X
Imprisonment of same

DEFENDERS #16...Assault of a police officer
Unlawful entry at the United Nations
Holding everyone in the entire United Nations complex hostage

X-MEN #104...Use of deadly force against new X-Men

CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #4...
Use of deadly force against Captain America
Wanton destruction of a S.H.I.E.L.D. research facility
Abduction and torture of "Mister One"

[more]

THE CRIMES OF MAGNETO (continued)

SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM-UP #14...
Use of deadly force against people of Latveria
Use of deadly force against the Avengers

X-MEN #110...Capture, imprisonment, and torture of the X-Men

X-MEN #113...Destruction of a series of militaery installations throughout Australia and New Zealand
Continued torture of the X-Men
Abandonment of X-Men at the bottom of an active volcano

X-MEN #150...Worldwide thermonuclear extortion
Sinking of the U.S.S.R. submarine Leningrad, killing all those aboard
The complete destruction of the city of Varykino (copy claims a mass evacuation)
Use of deadly force against Moira MacTaggert, Carol Danvers, Peter Corbeau, and Storm

VISION & THE SCARLET WITCH (Limited Series) #4...
Destruction of home of Bova
Torture of Bova

SECRET WARS #1...Use of force against Iron Man, Wasp, and Human Torch

SECRET WARS #2...Use of deadly force against Captain America, Spider-Man, Hawkeye, She-Hulk, Wasp, Captain Marvel, Mr. Fantastic, Iron Man, Human Torch, and the Thing
Forceful abduction of the Wasp

After delivering his plot for *The X-Men vs. The Avengers* #4, Roger Stern was informed that it presented a few problems that would be "fixed in house." The series' editors felt it was problematic for the X-titles' ongoing Magneto redemption storyline. The changes to Stern's plot proved to be substantial and he chose to leave the miniseries. Jim Shooter and Tom DeFalco stepped in to write the final issue.

AVENGERS VS. THE X-MEN #4
"Day of Judgment!"
Plot for 24 Pages
Roger Stern
11/14/86

1 SPLASH PAGE opens with DAN RATHER (or some such TV network news anchor seated at his news desk, looking intently out at the reader...a large, brooding head of MAGNETO (in Helmet) is superimposed to the right and behind Rather, with the Headline TERROR AT LARGE underneath the image of Magneto. Rather is jawboning about how Magneto is still on the loose, despite the best efforts of Earth's Mightiest Heroes. (Yes, Dan's about to tell us what's been going on the past few days/issues.)

[Let's have these first four panels shaped like TV screens. Make sure to give me a fair amount of copy space, as ol' Dan is going to be recapping quite a bit of material.]

2 We show a scene of the AVENGERS in that K-mart parking lot from issue one, as SHE-HULK rips that chunk of asteroid free from the downed Quinjet. Next, let's have a panel showing one of those "CBS news-animation" shots of the ASTEROID falling from orbit ("artist's conception") complete with arrow showing descent. Then a panel of showing one of those "news-graphix" charts... a stylized outline of Kampuchea with three groups of heads boxed in graphix arrows superimposed over it: one "arrow" showing the heads of the AVENGERS... one showing X-MEN (Storm, Wolverine, Rogue, Dazzler, & Havok)...and one with the SOVIET SUPER SOLDIERS...and those arrows all pointing to a Head of MAGNETO near the center of Kampuchea. Then a panel showing "news footage" of last issue's RESCUE AT SEA. Then a scene of an angry MOB bearing anti-mutant signs and banners (pics of Magneto prominent) met by CAPTAIN AMERICA, DOCTOR DRUID, and the BLACK KNIGHT in the streets of Singapore; CAP holding a hand up, calling for them to disperse.

3 A hail of ROCKS and BOTTLES is thrown at Avengers; CAP protects himself with his shield, DRUID gets behind BK & his spinning sword. Some of the CROWD start rocking bus barricade to turn it over. Suddenly, the bus is lifted by SHE-HULK. CAPTAIN MARVEL flashes onto the scene, a bottle melting to slag as it's thrown thru her. CM tells them to disperse, that they don't want anyone hurt. The MOB challenges CM, "How do we know you're not a mutant?" CM replies, "You don't. How do I know you're not?"

4 CM and the OTHER AVENGERS challenge mob further, saying that being a mutant is no crime; that they're after Magneto because of what he's done, not because he's a mutant. Suddenly, the skies open up in a driving RAIN STORM. DRUID's voice booms out to the soaked and confused mob, telling them to go home; they do. CAP looks up, seeing THOR on a rooftop raising his hammer in salute...CAP salutes back. Cut back to DAN RATHER delivering a final comment about how the X-Men were turned over to Avengers custody ("How were we supposed to hold them?" said Singapore officials) and no one knows where all the super-guys are now.

Courtesy Tom Brevoort

5 Cut to CM, THOR, and ROGUE zooming through the stratosphere alongside the BLACKBIRD & the QUINJET. Aboard the BLACKBIRD, we see CAP with STORM, DAZZLER, and HAVOK. CAP lays down the law to the X-Men about how important it is to all of them, that they find Magneto. Aboard the QUINJET, WOLVERINE slouches back in a seat, his feet up and lighting a cigar, while DRUID & SHE-HULK tell him the facts of life (BK is piloting). SHE-HULK grabs Wolv's CIGAR away, asking if he's heard her. WOLVERINE's nose is out of joint at being treated this way, but he mutters that he's currently more pissed off at Magneto for the way he acted and will play along with the heroes. BK says, "Great! Now all we have to do is figure out where in the world Magneto is hiding!"

AVENGERS GIVE LOTS OF ORDERS

[This room, for your information, is in a simple hotel in Holland. Magneto is dressed in civvies, his shirt sleeves rolled up. His costume is slung over a nearby chair; his Helmet is on the bed.]

6 Cut to a dimly lit room somewhere, where MAGNETO bends over an assortment of MICRO-CHIPS spread out on a desktop. MAGNETO smiles as he gestures causing the micro-chips to fly up from the desk, and assemble into into a vaguely helmet-shaped CIRCUIT WEB in midair. MAGNETO half-turns (Circuit Web still hangs in the air), his attention drawn to a nearby TV, where he sees another version of the TV story we saw in the opening (totally different commentator; this is a European broadcast). MAGNETO frowns, gesturing again, drawing his HELMET over the CIRCUIT WEB; the CIRCUIT WEB slips inside the helmet, fusing in place. MAGNETO plucks the helmet from the air, a determined look on his face...he knows now what he must do.

[See reference on strange island.]

7 Cut to that STRANGE ISLAND somewhere in the Bermuda Triangle which Magneto was using back around X-MEN #150...the BLACKBIRD & the QUINJET sit parked near one of the temple-like structures. Inside one of the buildings, WOLVERINE slashes his way through a wall, followed closely by the SHE-HULK. WOLV looks around, sniffing, saying Magneto hasn't been in here in months. In a lower chamber, CAP is accompanying DAZZLER and HAVOK, surveying a darkened corridor (Daz is acting as a light source, illuminating the darker corners). HAVOK catches sight of a huge lurking form moving in the shadows and (before Daz can shed any light on the subject) blasts it, while CAP grabs DAZ and leaps out of the way.

[The lurking form turns out to be an old statue that a trick of shifting light and shadow made appear to move.]

8 An OLD STATUE is pulverized by Havok's blast... except for the statue's head, which lands at Havok's feet; Havok looks sheepish. Cut to another chamber where THOR, DRUID and ROGUE search; Druid has levitated up a few feet to look at some sculpture, and Rogue is is surprised at seeing Druid standing in midair (is there no end to the surprises these Avengers have?). Cut finally to STORM alone on a high balcony, wind blowing in what there is of her hair. In her mind's eye STORM sees herself the way she originally looked, swooping through the air, smiling.

[When Storm first was on this island, her powers were inhibited by Magneto's devices, but her powers are really gone now; she's adjusted, but she still misses the freedom her powers gave her.]

9 Suddenly, CAPTAIN MARVEL swoops down out of the air in a similar way. CM materializes next to STORM; CM says their searching has been fruitless and questions Storm pointedly about whether the X-Men know of anyplace else where Magneto might hole up. STORM's temper flares, thinking that CM's accusing her of holding something back from the Avengers. CM holds up her hands in a peace-keeping gesture, saying she didn't mean it that way, but Magneto must be found, and maybe there's some place they've overlooked, somewhere they'd least expect him to be. Far below the balcony, BK comes running, yelling some news...he's picked up shortwave transmission about Magneto turning himself in to stand trial. Both CM and STORM are incredulous.

she doesn't flare

[See reference for the Palace of Peace.]

10 Cut to days later...a TV REPORTER stands in from of the PALACE OF PEACE at the Hague, discussing all the incredible goings on. TROOPS in riot garb and TANKS have formed a protective line around the Palace. Behind the protective line, the AVENGERS & the X-MEN stand talking with the TROOP COMMANDER. COMMANDER tells CM he's glad to have the Avengers on hand, but admits surprise at the X-Men's presence; STORM assures him they want to help avoid a repeat of what happened at Magneto's last trial. We see there's already a mass DEMONSTRATION going on outside the line of tanks.

they're not public figures

[This is a new trial with a new set of 5 presiding Justices, and new Defense and Prosecution attorneys. Magneto sits in costume, his helmet sitting on the table in front of him.]

in costume is weird.

11 Inside the Palace in a grand COURTROOM, Magneto's LAWYER moves that charges be dropped for crimes Magneto allegedly committed before his "rebirth"...and the PROSECUTOR objects. The JUSTICES table the defense move, pending consideration of evidence. MAGNETO surprised; his LAWYER tells him this is very different trial. MAGNETO drums his fingers on the table next to his HELMET; given the judicial decisions of his previous trial, he thought he had a good chance of a mitigation of sentence, if not an acquittal...has he made an error in judgment? Outside, a shouting, shoving match is starting between ANTI-MUTANT DEMONSTRATORS and PRO-MUTANT DEMONSTRATORS; the Antis accusing the Pros of supporting a murderer.

12 A PRO-mutant demonstrator yells back that mutant or not, a man should be innocent in the eyes of the law until proven guilty. A ROCK is thrown, catching the PRO-speaker upside the head. A nasty scuffle breaks out. AVENGERS and TROOPS wade in, separating the two factions. The X-MEN wait out of sight behind the line of tanks, not wanting to fan passions any higher by their appearance, and unsure of what else to do; WOLVERINE is pacing and smoking, angry at the feeling of helplessness. Inside the Peace Palace, the PROSECUTOR begins to call witnesses.

[See reference for the Flashback material.]

[Take room to show Magneto reacting to his accusers; this is a humbling and humiliating experience for him, having his most awful past sins trotted out for all to see.]

13 First, a South American DIPLOMAT is at the witness stand, angrily telling how Magneto overthrew the rightful government of Santo Marco. Follow this with a Flashback Panel showing one of Magneto's STORM TROOPERS rousting citizens off the streets at curfew time, a big Hitlerean poster of Magneto (wearing helmet) plastered on the side of a building in the background. Next a U.S. SENATOR takes the stand, telling how Magneto occupied the city of New York in a bid for world domination. Follow that with a Flashback panel of MAGNETO sitting on his throne in Central Park, holding Sue Richards and Dorma captive. Then, a Nuclear Regulatory Commission OFFICIAL is at the stand, telling how Magneto kidnapped them in an attempt to gain control of America's nuclear power. The NRC OFFICIAL angrily turns and points at MAGNETO, saying that Magneto put them under some sort of trance, and who knows what would happened if it weren't for the Avengers.

14 Inwardly seething, MAGNETO remembers how he used an early primitive device to entrance those officials. MAGNETO looks at his HELMET, and ponders how the circuitry inside of it could be utilized in a similar way. "No," thinks MAGNETO, "if I did that, I would be as bad as they say I am." Cut to outside, where the PRO and ANTI demonstrators are now separated by a wide gap maintained by TROOPS with riot shields; the AVENGERS stand in the middle of this no-man's-land. The ANTIs shout that the Avengers and the Pro-demonstrators are traitors to their own kind, that the only thing lower than muties are mutie lovers. One of the Pros, a young BLIND WOMAN with white cane and dark glasses, manages to slip past the Troops and out into no-man's land, shouting, "I'm a mutant! Are you so afraid of me?"

15 One of the troops goes to grab her, but CAP waves him off. The WOMAN stands alone, and removes her glasses, showing that she has no eyes, only flesh-covered depressions where her eyes should be..."I cannot see, can you? This is my mutation, this is what makes me different!" Back in the courtroom, the PROSECUTOR rolls some video footage for the Justices...first, a scene of the UNITED NATIONS BUILDING and grounds being held in midair over New York, the whole complex held hostage by Magneto...and then a scene of MUTANT ALPHA standing over MAGNETO and his CRONIES who have been reduced to babies. The PROSECUTOR looks pointedly at MAGNETO and his LAWYER, saying that he'll now introduce witnesses whose testimony will shatter once and for all the so-called "rebirth defense".

16 A SHIELD AGENT takes the stand, telling how MAGNETO ransacked a research facility and kidnapped the mutant known as Mister One. MAGNETO's LAWYER whispers to MAGNETO that he fears this is just the beginning, their whole case is unraveling; he'd warned Mag that they needed more time to prepare their case! MAGNETO's brow is furrowed in worry; he feels that if he's found guilty and sentenced now that it could be open season on mutants; that mustn't happen, he must be exonerated, he must make the court see! Cut back to the BLIND WOMAN, speaking to the crowd, "Yes, I'm a mutant...are you still afraid? Do you want to kill me? Why? You have nothing to fear from me!"...the crowd is growing quiet.

17 STORM emerges from behind the line of tanks, putting her hand on the woman's shoulder..."Nor from me!" STORM calls out to the crowd, saying that mutants are no more all good or all evil than anyone else...the crowd looks uncertain. Inside, an Australian SCIENTIST is at the witness stand, angrily describing how Magneto ravaged and looted a score of aerospace facilities throughout Australia and New Zealand. MAGNETO runs his fingers over his helmet, thinking there is no hope for the world's mutants without a strong leader. Outside, CAPTAIN MARVEL steps up alongside STORM and the BLIND WOMAN, telling the crowd that being a mutant is an accident of birth, bringing its own special gifts and problems, that the fact of being a mutant should not be on trial...only the alleged crimes of a lone man. "If you condemn all mutants for what Magneto has done," says CAPTAIN MARVEL, "you force them to associate with him!"

[See reference on Admiral Suvorov.]

18 Back inside, Soviet ADMIRAL SUVOROV icily describes how Magneto sank the submariner Leningrad, killing all aboard. MAGNETO is seized by a look of desperation; he must be the focus for a free mutant world, there is no one else capable in his mind. Before anyone can even think to question what he's doing, MAGNETO puts on the helmet! The next moment, every person in the courtroom is transfixed as Magneto's souped up BRAINWAVES radiate throughout the court. "You must listen to me," says Magneto, "this is all a terrible misunderstanding! I was right in what I did!" ALL in the courtroom look on, blankly. One JUSTICE puts a hand to his head, grimacing in pain.

19 Outside, DRUID has one hand to his temple; BK asks what's wrong, Druid says he's not sure, but he's gotten some kind of bad vibes from inside the Palace. Inside, MAGNETO finally removes the helmet. MAGNETO taps the side of the helmet, and a fine metal dust falls to the floor; the circuitry has burnt out, leaving no trace. With a gesture, MAGNETO causes the helmet to crumple into a tiny lump of metal. Outside, the AVENGERS and X-MEN are now standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the BLIND WOMAN. The TV REPORTER, off to one side, says that the actions of one brave woman has helped the heroes calm this mob.

[Magneto's mood here should be somber, almost downcast; he has sacrificed both the circuitry and the moral high ground for the "cause".]

20 The REPORTER puts a hand to his earphone, a surprised look on face, as he says there's an announcement from the Peace Palace. Cut to ANOTHER REPORTER inside the Palace (but not inside the courtroom), giving the stunning news that the Trial is over, and Magneto has been acquitted of crimes against humanity. Outside, thé CROWD, hearing this news via radios and portable TVs, is shocked and outraged. The ANTIs charge the police lines, throwing anything they can get their hands on. ROGUE flies the BLIND WOMAN out of harm's way. DRUID, BK, STORM, and WOLVERINE rush to herd the PROs to safety (STORM having to urge WOLVERINE not to fight the Antis but to come with them).

[During this rioting, we'll have some "TV voice-over" narration, saying that Magneto's "pre-rebirth" crimes had again been disallowed, other accusations stricken, and the dispute with the Soviets recognized as a war between two nations.]

21 CAP, SHE-HULK, THOR, CM, HAVOK & DAZZLER face the onrushing crowd. CAP, THOR, and SHE-HULK try to strong arm the crowd back, without causing too much injury. Cut to a TV image of MAGNETO and his LAWYER stepping up to a bank of microphones. Back outside, CAPTAIN MARVEL and DAZZLER emit blinding light to discourage the mob. Cut to TV image, MAGNETO begins to speak. Outside, THOR calls up hurricane winds to hold back the ANTIs.

22 On TV, MAGNETO publicly thanks the World Court for recognizing his claim of sovereignty for his "island nation". Cut outside to WOLVERINE slicing through chain link fence to provide exit for fleeing Pros. Back to MAGNETO on TV, offering to make reparations to the Soviets. Cut to HAVOK blasting a great trench in the pavement to further slow the Antis. Back to MAGNETO making a pitch to start a homeland for mutants, that they might take their place in the world, no longer to live in fear. Cut finally to a long shot of the aftermath of the riot, it looks like a battleground ...TROOPS and AMBULANCES are in great evidence, as the AVENGERS and X-MEN helping medics tend to injured victims of the rioting.

How could he make reparations?

SOUNDS LIKE AN "AIDS" ISLAND

23 The AVENGERS notice that one of the JUSTICES (the one who'd held his head in pain) is also being loaded into ambulance, having suffered a severe stroke. MAGNETO, flanked by his lawyer, strides into the AVENGERS midst, regally offering his thanks to the heroes for the help they rendered here today and saying they were right all along about he returning to stand trial. The AVENGERS regard him coldly; the whole affair smells to them; DRUID is especially suspicious, but knows he can prove nothing. CAP tells MAGNETO that there may be no international charges against him, but some nations may think differently about local charges. "We're going to walk away from this now," say the AVENGERS, "but if we ever catch wind of you getting out of line again, we'll on you like hair on an ape!" The AVENGERS turn on their heels and walk away.

MAGNETO GAVE HIM A STROKE?

NO!

DOESN'T SOUND LIKE CAPTAIN AMERICA

AVENGERS VS. X-MEN #4/Judgment/Stern/7

24 MAGNETO turns to the X-MEN, who look at him uncomfortably (they smell a fix as well); the BLIND WOMAN is with them...WOLVERINE says cynically, "Thanks for your help!" MAGNETO apologizes for not having gotten away from the press sooner. MAGNETO reaches out to the BLIND WOMAN, saying he was told of the brave stand she made, that she did "our cause proud!" The BLIND WOMAN pulls away from his touch, spitting in his direction, she says if mutants must be associated with such as him, then their cause is doomed. She also walks away...and MAGNETO is left standing there, a very symbolic distance apart from the rest of the X-Men...and he begins to realize that the misstep he has taken has not yielded anything like the results he'd hoped for.

X-MEN AREN'T VERY SUPPORTIVE

--THE END--

This Mutant Registration Act house ad with art by Jon Bogdanove was featured in November 1987 titles. It puts a menacing spin on a public service announcement that debuted in the late 1960s. Even today, at the open of local news broadcasts, some TV stations still ask, "It's 10:00pm. Do you know where your children are?"

IT'S 1987. DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR CHILDREN ARE?
MUTIE
Paid for by citizens in support of The Mutant Registration Act.
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December 1987 X-titles (*The Uncanny X-Men* #224, *The New Mutants* #58 and *X-Factor* #23) featured an insert promoting *Excalibur*'s Special Edition debut, "The Fall of the Mutants" event and a Mutant Registration contest. For the contest, readers were encouraged to submit mutant character concepts with the winner's character appearing in a future issue. The winning submission, Alchemy, was featured in *X-Factor* #41-42 (June-July 1989) by Louise Simonson & Arthur Adams.

COMING IN DECEMBER . . .

EXCALIBUR™

By Chris Claremont, Alan Davis and Paul Neary

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FALL OF THE MUTANTS™ CHECKLIST

Follow the 9-part saga through these exciting issues:

NEW MUTANTS™ #59 #60* #61

X-MEN® #225 #226* #227

X-FACTOR™ #24 #25* #26

And the storyline will also affect these titles:

CAPTAIN AMERICA® #339
HULK® #340
DAREDEVIL® #252*
POWER PACK® #35

*denotes double-sized issue

MUTANT REGISTRATION FORM

Department of Justice
Office of ParaHuman Affairs
Mutant Task Force

Name _____

Birthdate _____ **Sex** ____

Address _____

_____

Code Name _____

Mutant Power _____

Classification (1,2,3) _____
(see description of power classes on reverse side of form)

WARNING!
This is a Federal Document

Under the terms of the Mutant Registration Act of 1987, all residents of the United States who possess Mutant ParaHuman Abilities must register these powers with the Federal Government. This is defined as those born with ParaHuman Abilities and the genetic potential to plant this potential in their offspring. Failure to file this application is a felony punishable by fine and imprisonment.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

CUT HERE

MARVEL® COMICS MUTANT DRAWING

This is your big chance to star in a MARVEL COMIC!

Send us your mutant name with a description of your special power.

One lucky person will be chosen at random and the character will appear in a future issue of NEW MUTANTS!

Fill out the back of this Drawing Card and return it to your nearest comic book specialty store in order to take part in our special drawing. If you don't live near a specialty store, place this card in an envelope and mail to:

MUTANT DRAWING
Marvel Comics
387 Park Avenue South
NY, NY 10016

Name _____

Address _____

Code Name _____

Mutant Power _____

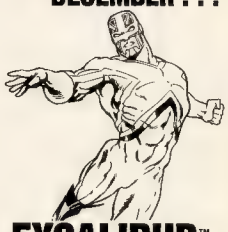
PLEASE NOTE: Pursuant to the Mutant Registration Act of 1987, ParaHuman Abilities have been classified according to the following scale:

CLASS 1: EXTRAPHYSICAL
a) extreme strength (ex. COLOSSUS)
b) focused energy release (ex. CYCLOPS)
c) telekinetic (ex. MARVEL GIRL)

CLASS 2: EXTRASENSORY/PSYCHIC
a) astral/image projection (ex. MIRAGE)
b) telepathic (ex. PSYLOCKE)
c) extrasensory (ex. CALIBAN)

CLASS 3: HEIGHTENED NORMAL ABILITIES
a) cerebral (ex. CYPHER)
b) physical (ex. BEAST)

COMING IN DECEMBER . . .



EXCALIBUR™

By Chris Claremont, Alan Davis and Paul Neary

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Marvel Age #65 (August 1988) announced Paul Beatsow as the winner of the Mutant Registration contest.

X-TRA THE MUTANT REPORT X-TRA

VOLUME 3 "THE NEXT STEP IN NEWS EVOLUTION" NUMBER 6

"AND THE WINNER IS . . ."

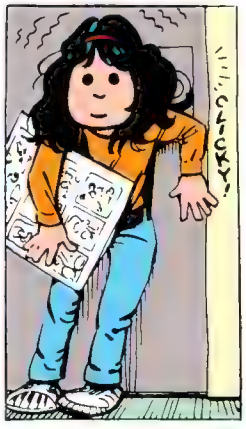
. . . ALCHEMY!

Paul Beatsow of Sheffield, England, won the Marvel Comics Mutant Drawing with his entry, Alchemy. Picked by ex-X-editor Ann Nocenti, Paul's letter was one of over eight thousand entries sent in by mutant lovers from all over the world who responded to the mutant registration cards inserted in X-MEN #224, THE NEW MUTANTS #58, and X-FACTOR #23.

Alchemy possesses the power to transform the chemical make-up of any non-organic matter, such as changing lead into gold! Alchemy will debut in a future issue of THE NEW MUTANTS written by Louse Simonson. Congratulations, Paul!

Ann Nocenti picks the winning entry.

Ann can't seem to contain her excitement as she selects the winning entry. Neo-Editor Terry Kavanagh steps in to restore order.



Be here next issue, when Bobbie Chase interviews Ann concerning her mutant past, and her freelancing future. Meanwhile, check out the full story on MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS WOLVERINE beginning on the very next page!

Mr. Sinister character design
by Marc Silvestri

Marvel Age #57 (December 1987) feature on "The Fall of the Mutants" and *The Best of Marvel Comics* collection released through Sears with its new Wolverine story.

X-TRA THE MUTANT REPORT X-TRA

VOLUME 2 "THE NEXT STEP IN NEWS EVOLUTION" NUMBER 10

PERSECUTION, BETRAYAL, AND DEATH IN "THE FALL OF THE MUTANTS"

The bloody Mutant Massacre almost destroyed the X-Men, X-Factor, and the New Mutants. But as devastating as that event was, it's nothing compared to what the three mutant groups will encounter in the climax of the anti-mutant hysteria called "The Fall Of The Mutants."

It begins in September in THE NEW MUTANTS #59, X-MEN #225, and X-FACTOR #24, and before it concludes two months later, almost everything you know about all three groups will have changed! Be here next month for more details!

THE X-MEN IN "THE BEST OF MARVEL COMICS"

What's 256 pages long, sports a handsome hardcover binding, is overflowing with adventure and excitement, is priced at a mere $19.95, and is available at Sears stores and comics specialty shops everywhere by the time you read this? If you guessed THE BEST OF MARVEL COMICS, you're right!

Mutant watchers will immediately spot among the plethora of titanic tales of the past the emotionally-wrenching saga from X-MEN #183, "He'll Never Make Me Cry." Written by Chris Claremont, penciled by John Romita Jr., and inked by Dan Green, it relates the painful consequences within the X-Men over Colossus's break-up with Kitty Pryde, and the deadly consequences of Colossus's confrontation with the Juggernaut. In addition, THE BEST OF MARVEL COMICS features an all-new solo Wolverine adventure written especially for this anthology by Chris, penciled by Marshall Rogers, and inked by Randy Emberlin. It features Wolverine in Japan — a country where he's not wanted, alive *or* dead!

You'll also find collected in this deluxe volume classic tales of the Fantastic Four, Spider-Man, Captain America, Thor, Doctor Strange, the Black Panther and, well, we think you get the idea! So what are you waiting for? If you want to be with the best of 'em, check out THE BEST OF MARVEL COMICS.

'It's Genetic' by kyle baker.

It's hard being the Dazzler.

Marvel Age #58 (January 1988) featured a cover by Bret Blevins as well as a three-page article on "The Fall of the Mutants" event.

MARVEL
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MARVEL AGE®
THE FALL OF THE MUTANTS™
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ONLY 50¢
FULL DETAILS INSIDE ON THE STORY THAT WILL ROCK THE MARVEL UNIVERSE!

X-TRA THE MUTANT REPORT X-TRA

VOLUME 2 "THE NEXT STEP IN NEWS EVOLUTION" NUMBER 11

THE FALL OF THE MUTANTS

Fall; autumn; the twilight season. This is the time of year when life fades and the smell of death hangs in the air, a chilling hint of the winter soon to come. "The Fall of the Mutants," both the season and the special crossover stories starting this month, is a powerful, tragic time in the lives of everyone's favorite X-People that will change the direction of their careers for all time.

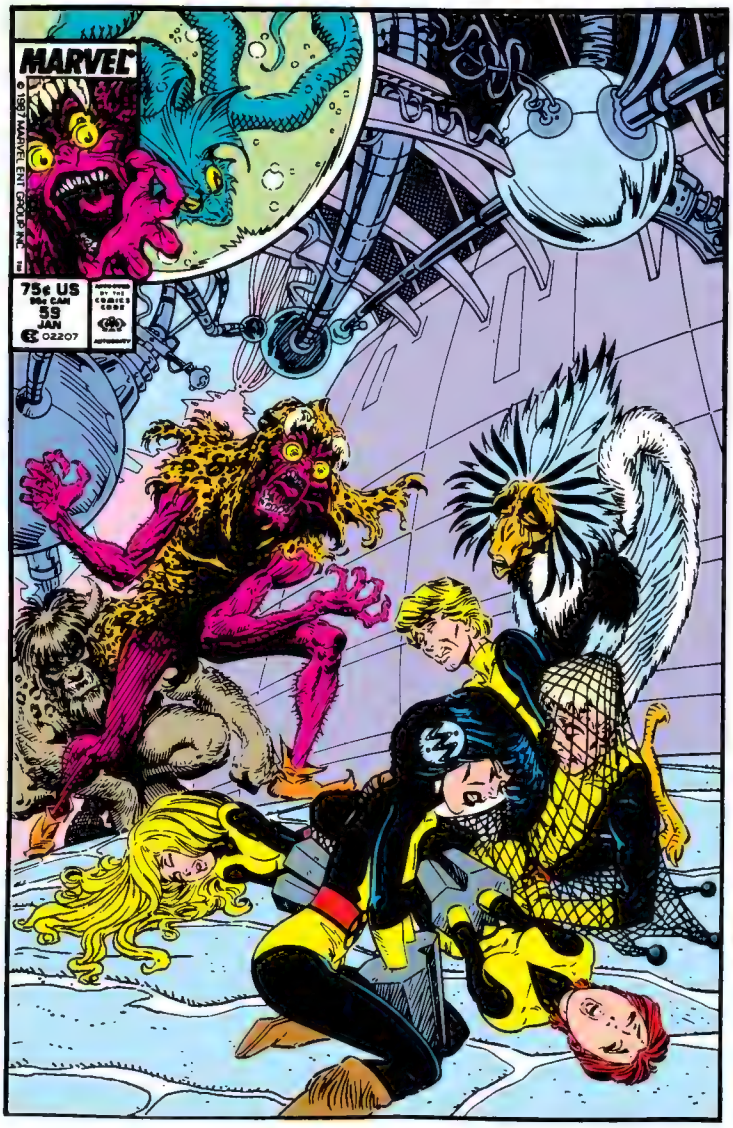
"This set of stories, collectively called 'The Fall of the Mutants,' is bigger than the massacre stories of a year ago, more far reaching," explained X-MEN's assistant editor Terry Kavanagh. "The end result of 'The Fall' is to level out mutant hysteria, but it won't solve the situation."

All three mutant books will carry the story of "The Fall." X-MEN #s 225, 226 and 227, NEW MUTANTS #s 59, 60 and 61, and X-FACTOR #s 24, 25 and 26 each tell separate tales that have interrelated repercussions. Additional insights and residual effects can be seen over the next few months in DAREDEVIL, CAPTAIN AMERICA, THE HULK, and POWER PACK titles.

Writers Chris (X-MEN) Claremont and Louise (NEW MUTANTS, X-FACTOR) Simonson have coordinated events to revolve around three pivotal issues. "These pivotal events will result in radical changes in the premise of each group," explained Louise. "These are not crossover stories in the traditional sense. 'The Fall' is made up of separate happenings all of which have ramifications in the various mutant books."

In X-MEN, the pivotal event begins when the United States Congress passes the Mutant Registration Act. This act calls for all people displaying mutant abilities to register with the government. How the X-Men react to this law, as well as the untimely interference of the villain known as the Adversary, result in terrible loss and massive destruction. "As bad as things have been in the past is nothing compared to what's going to happen in 'The Fall' and beyond," said Chris. "I don't want to give anything away, but expect the unexpected."

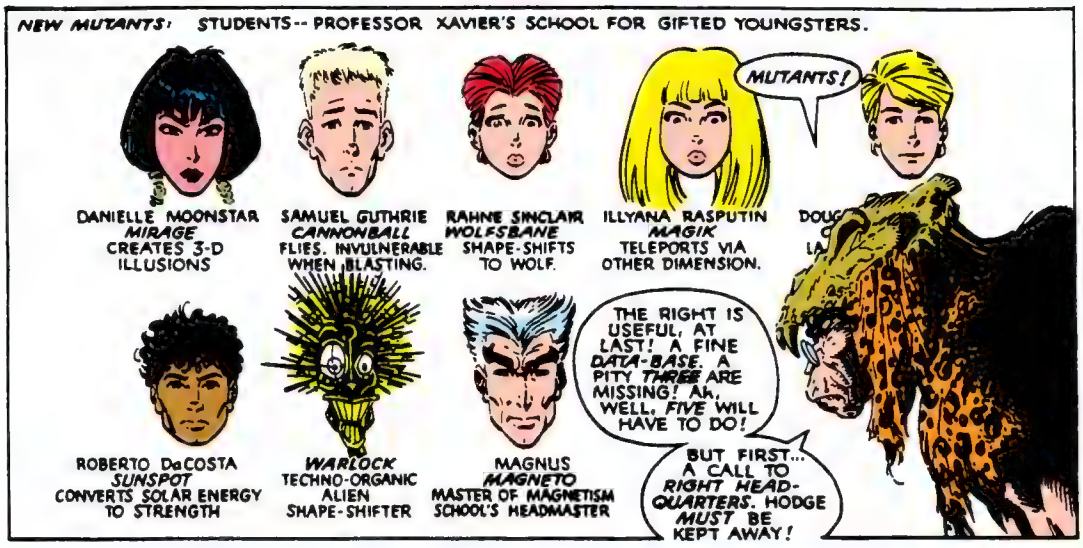
X-FACTOR has its hands full when Apocalypse decides to make his move. He's not happy with the direction in which the team is going so he makes them an offer they can't refuse. "Apocalypse offers X-Factor the world. Their response makes up the three-issue saga that ends with a new headquarters for the team, new costumes, and a new modus operandi," explained Louise. Also on hand will be The Right, a mysterious group



that is fast becoming X-Factor's Hydra. "They're a real tough anti-mutant bunch that's been behind much of the team's problems of late. We'll also see their influence in NEW MUTANTS," Louise said. Not to be outdone by Chris, Louise promises that we'll see a great deal of destruction. A great battle will be waged in, about, and above Manhattan. "When it's all over, the skyline won't be the same." We'll also learn a lot about the Fourth Horseman. Whatever you may have guessed concerning this person, there's more! And Apocalypse loses a Horseman before all is said and done. "No one comes out of this unscathed," Louise said.

Age doesn't matter when death and destruction come calling. Just ask the New Mutants. The pivotal event that sparks their series of adventures revolves around the mysterious Bird Brain and his creator the Animator, an agent of The Right. "The New Mutants return to the island where Bird Brain came from and find a people no one knew he had. We'll learn where he came from and why," explained Louise. "In the face of these events and the events chronologized in the other books, the New Mutants will have to make some hard decisions about the world and their place in it. And one of their group is going to die." But the bad things won't end with "The Fall" stories. There is powerful, evil stuff brewing in the White Queen's camp, stuff that will give the New Mutants little time to mourn.

Be on the lookout for the middle issues in "The Fall of the Mutants" epic. X-MEN #226, NEW MUTANTS #60, and X-FACTOR #25 will be double-sized volumes containing twice as much excitement and even more insights into the events that promise to change the mutant world. "And all of this is just the beginning," explained Louise. "Wait until you see what we've got planned for *next* summer!"



HAVE YOU REGISTERED?

Have you registered your mutant powers? Inserted in copies of X-FACTOR #23, THE NEW MUTANTS #58, and X-MEN #224 was a three-part Mutant Registration Form. Just like the mutants in the Marvel Universe, you have a chance to register your name and power with a higher authority (in this case Marvel Comics). Also included on the three-part insert is a brief word about the Mutant Registration Act and a checklist of all books taking part in "The Fall of the Mutants" storyline (another good reason to find the form).

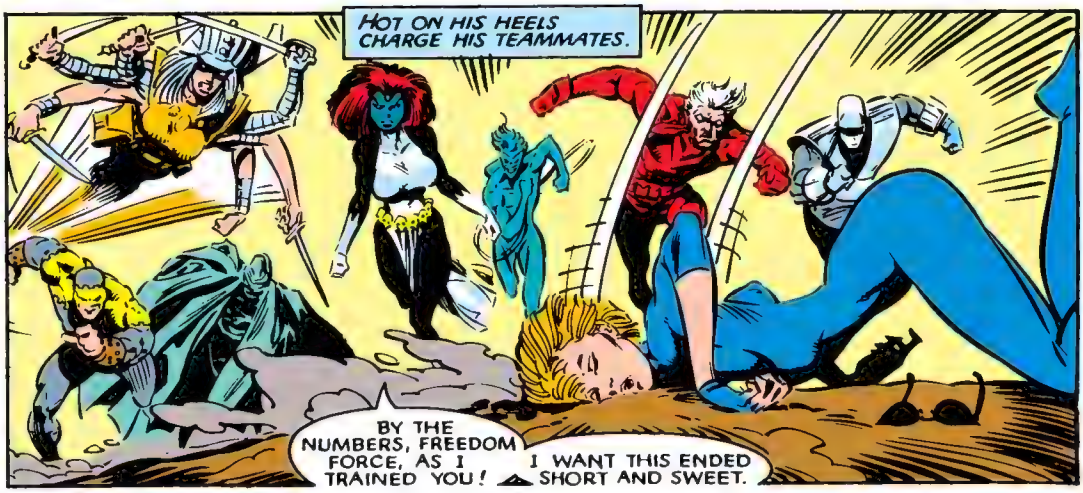
Have you filled out your form? If not, there's still time if you hurry. Just write your name, address, and mutant power in the appropriate spaces and mail it in. One card will be picked at random and that lucky individual will appear in one of the mutant books. "I think this idea is tremendous fun," said Louise Simonson, writer of NEW MUTANTS and X-FACTOR. "I volunteered to write the story that features the winner. And it won't be just a cameo shot. It will be a big, full-issue story."

But if you feel that Mutant Registration isn't the American way, you can attend one of the many Anti-Mutant Registration Parties taking place at local comic shops all over the country. If your comic shop isn't planning one of these fantastic events, tell them they're making a mistake and to contact their Marvel representative for more information.

And be on the lookout for the official "Fall of the Mutants" 22" × 34" retail promotional poster. Titled "It's Always Darkest . . .", the poster features a large number of heroes from the three mutant books and is illustrated by Alan Davis and Paul Neary.

The Fall of the Mutants. What an interesting time of year!

—*Bill Slavicsek*

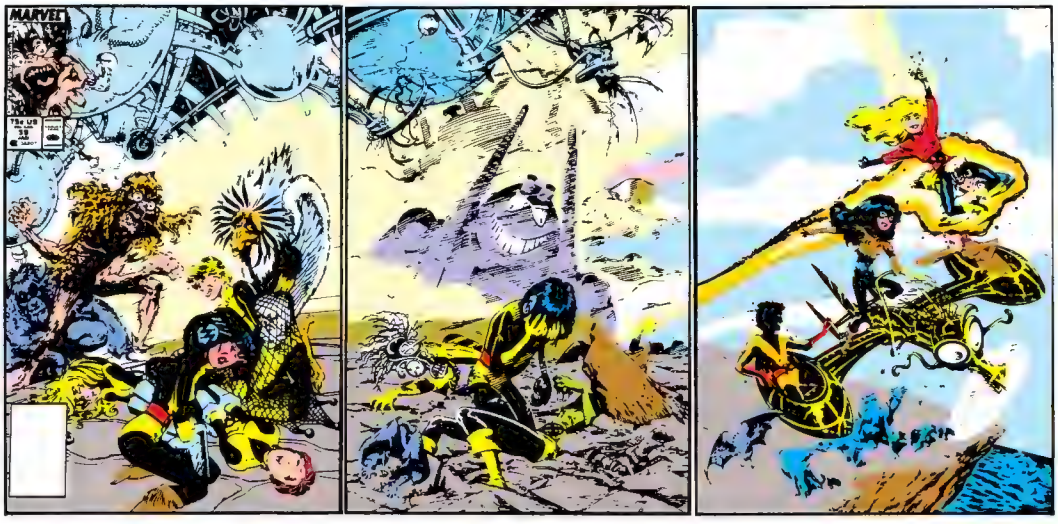


Marvel Age #59 (February 1988) feature on "The Fall of the Mutants" connecting covers, and, hey, look, the first *Marvel Masterworks* X-Men volume!

X-TRA **THE MUTANT REPORT** X-TRA

VOLUME 2 "THE NEXT STEP IN NEWS EVOLUTION" NUMBER 12

A TRIO OF TRIPTYCHS



The artists of the X-MEN, X-FACTOR, and THE NEW MUTANTS have designed the three covers of "The Fall of the Mutants" trilogy in their respective titles to form dynamic panoramas.

The covers of X-MEN #s 225—227 are penciled by Marc Silvestri and inked by Dan Green, THE NEW MUTANTS #s 59–61 are penciled by Bret Blevins and Terry Austin, and X-FACTOR #s 25–26 are penciled by Walter Simonson and inked by Bob Wiacek.

Each triptych will soon be a Marvel Press poster, but why wait? You can start collecting these masterpieces right now!

MARVEL MASTERWORKS starring the original X-MEN and others!

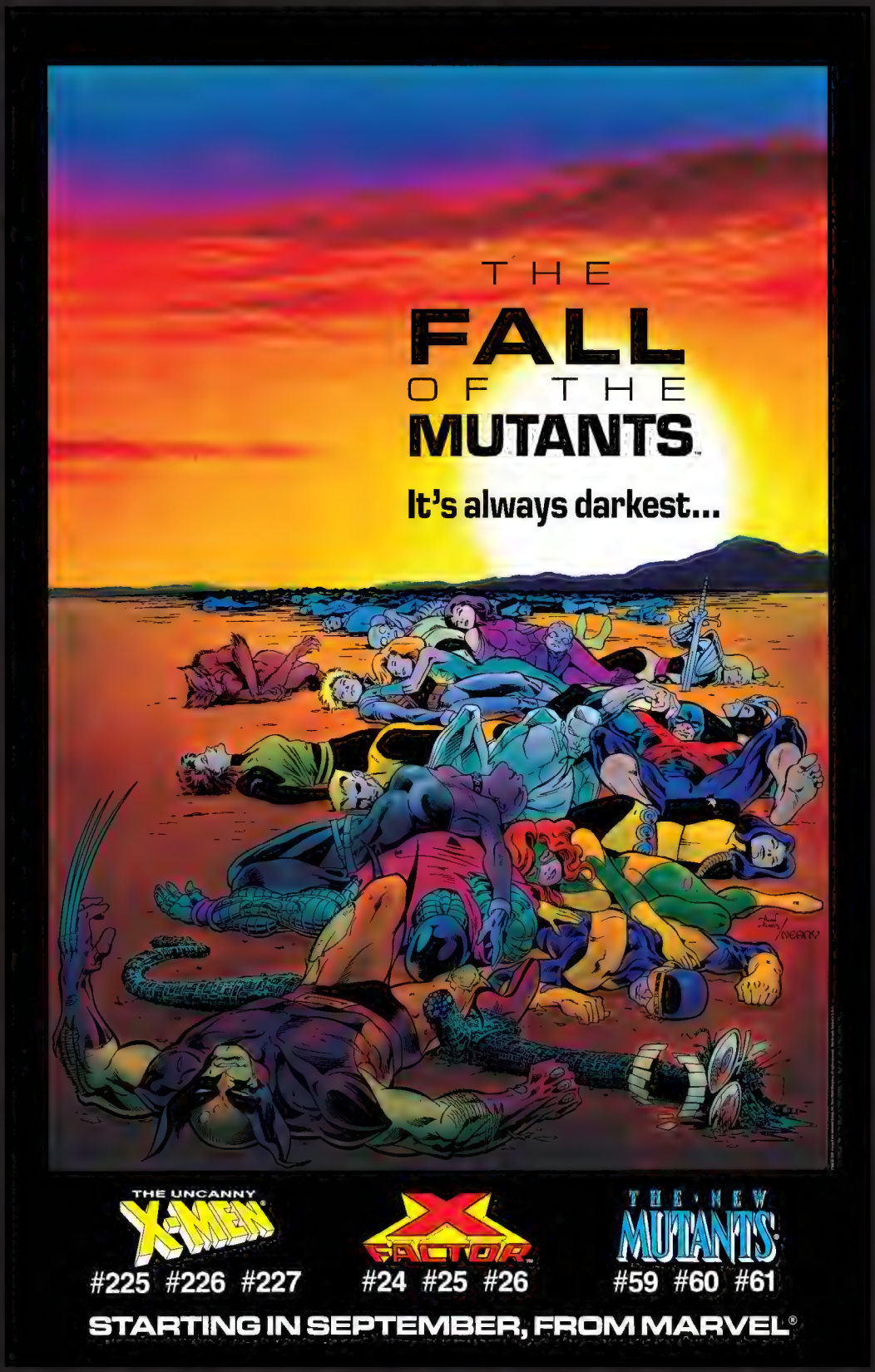
A Christmas highlight for mutant-lovers is the third volume in the high-quality hardcover MARVEL MASTERWORK series which re-presents the first ten issues of THE UNCANNY X-MEN. On sale next month, the 240-page volume book contains the adventures of the original X-Men by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby and inked by Sol Brodsky, Paul Reinman, and Chic Stone. It's price is $29.95 and in addition to the stories, it will feature a new introduction by Stan Lee, and biographies of Stan and Jack Kirby.

Previous volumes re-presented THE FANTASTIC FOUR and THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN classic adventures. And each is a sure-fire stocking stuffer!

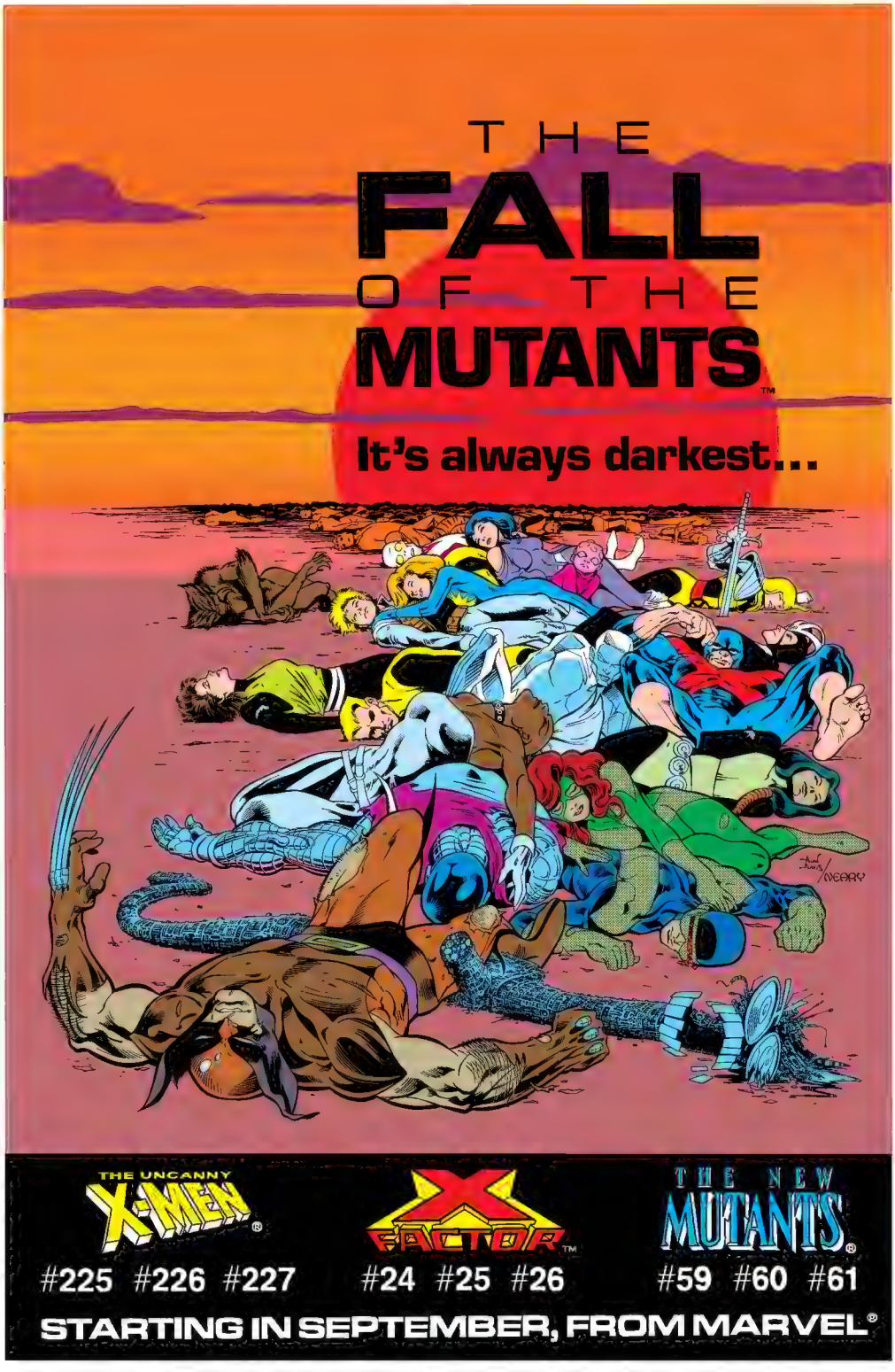
"It's Genetic"
by Kyle Baker
My, what a day. What a lovely day. The sun is shining, not a cloud in the sky. What a beautiful, beautiful, beautiful...
Wolverine is about to get kicked in the groin.

The Uncanny X-Men #225-227 cover triptych
by Marc Silvestri & Dan Green

Marvel Press Poster: The Fall of the Mutants (1987)
by Alan Davis & Paul Neary



"The Fall of the Mutants" house ad from December 1987 titles
by Alan Davis & Paul Neary



Comics Week #4 (August 1987) "The Fall of the Mutants" cover
by Kevin Nowlan

Classic X-Men #26 (October 1988) "The Fall of the Mutants" pinup
by Marc Silvestri & Dan Green

Marvel Age #62 (May 1988) feature on the X-Men's new status quo.

X-TRA THE *MUTANT* REPORT X-TRA

VOLUME 3 "THE NEXT STEP IN NEWS EVOLUTION" NUMBER 3

THE X-MEN ARE DEAD, LONG LIVE THE X-MEN®

The X-Men, dead to the world at large, have relocated to a savage new land — the Australian Outback. But mutants — *cyborg* mutants, at that have first claim to the territory and they're not giving it up without a fight! And, even if the X-Men can defeat the Reavers, what can they do with them then without re-revealing their own existence to the world? That's where Roma, the Guardian of the Multiverse, comes in with her *Siege Perilous* ... and things will never be the same again for the X-Men!

X-MEN #229, "Down Under," marks a new beginning for our outcast mutants with the debut of not only Storm's new look and costume, but also ... a mysterious *new* X-Man. Gateway is an ancient Australian Aborigine and what the X-Men don't know about him, *will* hurt them! Chris Claremont, Marc Silvestri, and Dan Green are also taking this opportunity to show us the tragic origin of a villainess who will soon be playing a major role in the upcoming weekly Wolverine solo series for MARVEL COMICS. (More on that next issue ...)

Marvel Age #63 (June 1988) boasted a cover by comics icon Russ Heath and eight pages on the first X-Men television cartoon, released in 1989 as *Pryde of the X-Men*.

X-TRA THE MUTANT REPORT X-TRA

VOLUME 3 "THE NEXT STEP IN NEWS EVOLUTION" NUMBER 4

BEHIND-THE-SCENES X-CLUSIVE REPORT ON THE MAKING OF THE ANIMATED X-MEN®

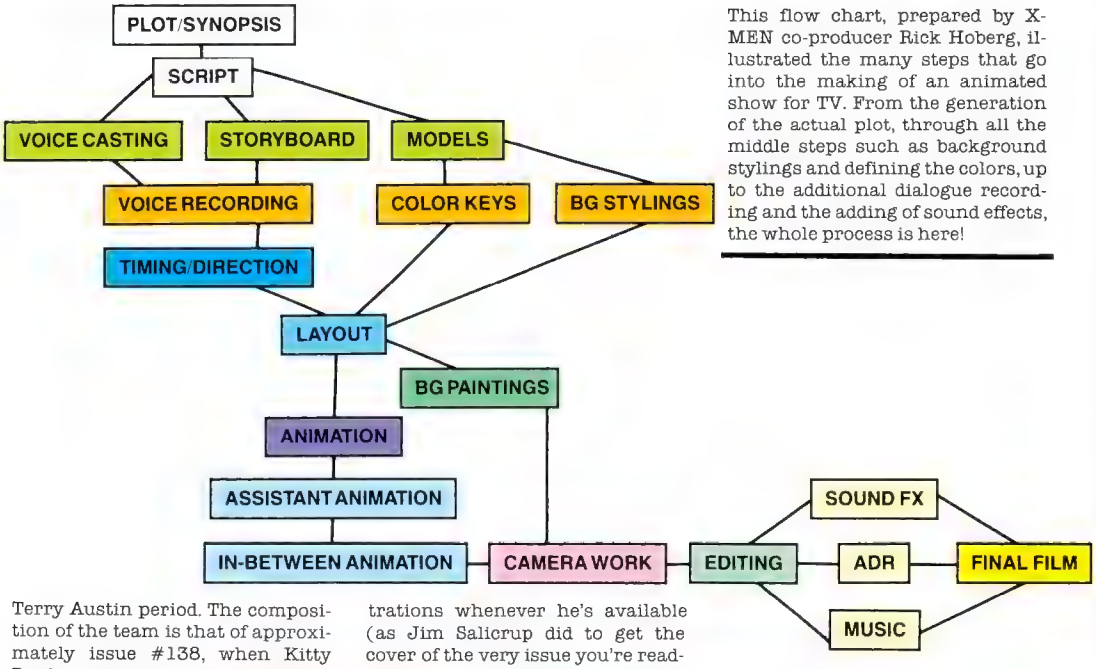
"Veni, video, vici" — this is an old Latin motto meaning, "I came, I appeared on TV, I conquered!" And very soon, this motto may be claimed by the uncanny X-Men, when they appear in their own animated television series!

When will this be? Time and fate will decide; so far only the pilot has been completed, and the good folk at Marvel Productions in Los Angeles are hard at work developing it into a full-fledged series. Perhaps we'll see THE X-MEN as a Saturday morning attraction, or perhaps as a syndicated daily show. But one thing's for sure, seeing such popular characters as Professor X, Cyclops, Storm, Wolverine, Colossus, Nightcrawler, Dazzler, Kitty Pryde, and Lockheed on television is a spectacle of — dare we say — *uncanny* fascination!

Visiting the Marvel Productions offices the week before Christmas, I screened the pilot through the generosity of co-producers Rick Hoberg and Larry Houston (and special thanks as well to Stan the Man and his terrific assistant, Lonna Poland). The creative team on the show is comprised of Rick and Larry, their third co-producer Will Meugniot, veteran scripter Larry Parr, and production designer Russ Heath, as well as Stan himself. While watching the show was as nice a Christmas present as I could have asked for, nonetheless I scrutinized the characters carefully to see how faithfully they were transposed to the screen — remembering how, when I was a kid, minor inconsistencies in the 1968 Spider-Man cartoon show used to drive me crazy!

Fortunately for my sanity, the producers of X-MEN have devoted extra care to bringing our favorite mutants to the screen intact — making only those changes that they deemed absolutely necessary for the animation medium. For continuity buffs, the show can be set roughly during the peak of the Chris Claremont, John Byrne, and

These storyboards were also helpfully supplied by Rick — (with thanks to Margaret Loesch's office for permission!) — they show how the creators of the show plan shots and sequences to accompany the script dialogue, broken up into pieces beneath the pictures. Thanks, Rick!



This flow chart, prepared by X-MEN co-producer Rick Hoberg, illustrated the many steps that go into the making of an animated show for TV. From the generation of the actual plot, through all the middle steps such as background stylings and defining the colors, up to the additional dialogue recording and the adding of sound effects, the whole process is here!

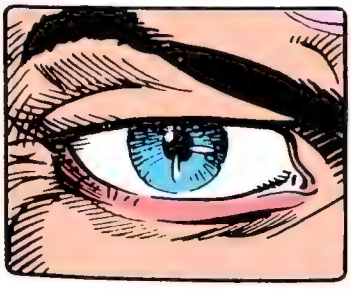
Terry Austin period. The composition of the team is that of approximately issue #138, when Kitty Pryde was recruited for the team. Dazzler had been introduced along with Kitty some eight issues before, so her presence on the team in the cartoon doesn't violate the established legend.

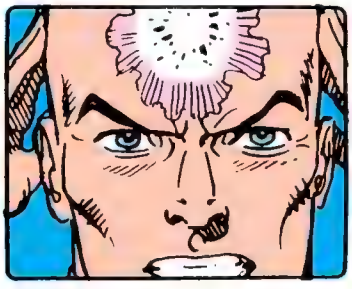
The hard work and care of all involved has paid off handsomely, creating a pilot with twenty-two minutes (that's minus commercial time) of non-stop action and excitement. But it's only logical: Will, Larry, Rick and Russ are old hands in comics, well-known to comic book art followers, and all of them with successful and substantive careers at Marvel Comics and elsewhere. While many animated versions of Marvel's characters have been brought to the screen by folks who wouldn't know a super hero comic book from an issue of MILLIE THE MODEL, this time it's been done by creators who know and care for the characters and their magnificent Marvel history. Russ Heath's work may be the most immediately familiar; editors jump for his commanding cover illustrations whenever he's available (as Jim Salicrup did to get the cover of the very issue you're reading right now, as well as his great G.I. JOE cover for MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE #56)! Some of the illustrations that accompany this article are model sheets done by Russ Heath, prepared so that the animators of the new show will keep the look of the characters consistently excellent.

Model sheets, plotlines, and storyboards are worked out at Marvel Productions in Los Angeles. The actual cel work — the painstaking reproduction of drawing after drawing, with only minute changes to create the illusion of movement, and its final result on film — is done by Mr. Akehi and his wizards at Toei Animation in Japan. (And when you reflect on the many ties the X-Men have had to Japan, somehow it only seems appropriate!) Then the vocal talent is cast and recorded back in Los Angeles; for a complete picture of the process, see the chart accompanying this article. It's an intricate and complicated procedure, but one most modern cartoon shows go through before they appear on the tube!

Incidentally, it's worth mentioning that the animators at Toei described the X-MEN as the best animation product they'd ever seen from America — so much so that they did 65 retakes out of their own pocket just to pull off some of the trickier shots! One example is a dynamic shot which picks up the X-Men's Blackbird aircraft and spins about it in vertiginous speed and detail, so much so that the susceptible viewer may reach for the Dramamine! So popular have the mutants become, Toei's head animators have reportedly started collecting all the X-MEN material they can find!

For those skeptics among you (yes, I can see you shaking your head there in the back row), the thought of such well-loved characters as the X-MEN being translated into other media probably has you on your guard. And considering the state in which some other heroes have made it to the tube, who can





blame you? So as to assuage those fears, why don't we go through the characters one by one, and look at how they've made the TV transition? Let's start with the heroes:

PROFESSOR X: The leader of the mutant marvels is everything you'd expect, from his first appearance as an astral image welcoming Kitty Pryde to the X-Mansion (shorthand for Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters). He controls Cerebro, he manipulates the Danger Room, he's even overwhelmed by psionic backlash (as Charlie tends to be on a regular basis, when you think about it). Naturally, he's in a wheelchair; this is before a new body was cloned for him, curing his crippled legs. Stan Lee describes Xavier as a character he particularly identifies with, stoically holding the team together (you may not have ever thought of Stan as stoic, but you argue it with him), and here he is, in all his professorial grandeur. The single fact, more than any other, that should convey the strength and authority of the animated Professor X is that his voice is supplied by actor John Stevenson — whom trivia buffs may recognize as the voice of Johnny Quest's father, the sage scientist extraordinaire, Dr. Benton Quest!

CYCLOPS: The mutant mainstay, Scott Summers, is instantly recognizable, haunted as ever by the force beams constantly emitted from his eyes. His costume has been adjusted just slightly for better animation; rather than his eyebeam being activated by pressing a palm control, which doesn't read too effectively on screen, Scott touches the sides of his visor to trigger the beam.

STORM: For nostalgic types, the X-Men's other perennial leader is outfitted in her original long tresses and flowing cape. There have been model sheets done with her punk look, which producer Rick Hoberg says is equally popular, and perhaps she may adopt the look in future episodes — or even switch back and forth. But all that is for the future; in the present episode we first see her on a mountaintop created in the Danger Room, surrounded by lightning bolts — the quintessential Storm!

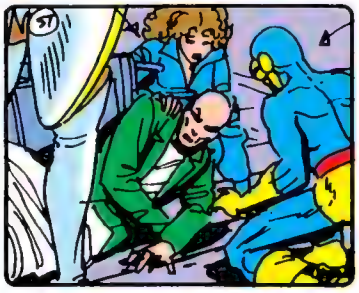
WOLVERINE: Now maybe you've been thinking, nah, there's no way *Logan* can be as savage and ferocious on screen as he is in the comics. But his animated incarnation is out to prove you wrong: he uses his trademarked adamantium claws to slice up anything that needs slicing, starting with a huge Danger Room robot, and ending with the walls, doors, and defense systems in Asteroid M. (And if that doesn't give you a clue who the major villain in the show is, you'd best stay up all night with the X-MEN INDEX!) Logan's costume, claws, height (or lack thereof), and personality are all directly identical to his comics appearance — down to the hair on his arms, down to his warning that Kitty may not be tough enough to survive, down to his very real enjoyment in using those claws. There's no doubt at all he's the most lethal of the team.

NIGHTCRAWLER: Okay, okay, you can't smell the stench of brimstone, but otherwise, he's the original fuzzy elf, romantic Austrian accent and all! He bamfs about with abandon, he spins and cavorts with acrobatic glee — and he saves the day! Wait a few seconds for the story synopsis while we cover the rest of the characters, okay?

COLOSSUS: It's a delight to watch Peter transform from his normal frame to an armored, silver powerhouse; and as Stan Lee notes, his Russian accent is a particular pleasure. Colossus rips through steel walls, looks around at the havoc he has caused in the villains' stronghold, and says, "Iss *good!*"

KITTY PRYDE: The X-MEN pilot is loosely based on Kitty Pryde's joining the team, although the menace that gives her a baptism of fire has been changed to Magneto and the Brotherood of Evil Mutants. New readers may not remember that there was a time when Kitty, now toughened by her experiences with Wolverine in Japan, was insecure and frightened by her new powers, but it's been recreated here, including her initial repulsion of Nightcrawler, and her subsequent admiration and affection for him. While her TV personality goes back to the beginning, though, her TV costume is completely up-to-date: it's the blue blouse-leotard-and-tights outfit she currently wears.

DAZZLER: Though not a member of the team when Kitty joined, Dazzler was around back then, and her presence gives the team a better male/female balance. (Jean Grey/Phoenix may appear in the future, but her story alone would take up the episode's full 22 minutes to explain — at least!) Alison Blaire's light powers are also especially effective in animation; in a way, after all, any cartoon is ultimately just a series of images in light! Dazzler's outfitted in the blue jumpsuit she currently wears (sorry, roller skate fans), accompanied by a brick-colored jacket, and looks, in-



deed, dazzling!

LOCKHEED: Let's face it, it's a given of the world of animation that any team cartoon show features a cute animal — and so who better to fill the bill than Lockheed the Dragon? He's a dead ringer for his comics incarnation, as he's discovered on Magneto's Asteroid M (apparently just an extraterrestrial a very long phone call from home), who decides to "adopt" Kitty. In a funny throwaway bit, the Toad is seen chasing Lockheed in his spare time, evoking those types who like to pull the wings off flies for fun.

That covers the good guys! Other members, such as Rogue, may be introduced in the future to join the team, when the continuity is right to bring them in. And older members such as Iceman and the Angel may also appear, as forthcoming episodes give the creative team an opportunity to detail the rich and glorious history of Xavier's legacy. Meanwhile, let's review the malcontents — the ne'er-do-wells — the bad guys!

MAGNETO: As the mention of Asteroid M should have clued you in, the Master of Magnetism is on hand in his original villainous incarnation. Perhaps in episodes far in the future, he'll evolve to his present benevolent persona, but that too is for the future. For now, you couldn't ask for a more sinister villain: using devices on board Asteroid M, Magneto plans to collide the Scorpio Comet into Earth, thus wiping out much of humanity, and leaving mutants to rule over the survivors! Towering over any other character in the show, with a voice that could shake mountains and eyes that glare powerfully from the shadows of his helmet, he's obviously one of the premiere Marvel villains. As he has often done, Magneto is leading the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, employing their terrorist tactics toward the goal of world domination over helpless homo sapiens. The Brotherhood, as assembled for the show, contains members of both the old and new Brotherhoods: its members are the Blob, the Toad, Pyro, Juggernaut, and in a surprise move, the White Queen!

THE WHITE QUEEN: Now admittedly, the White Queen isn't a member of either Brotherhood, old or new. But the team needed a woman member who was completely, undeniably villainous, so characters like the Scarlet Witch or Rogue wouldn't do. But hey, you're going to complain about a character who looks as great as Emma Frost? Even with her ensemble tailored ever so slightly to conform to children's show standards, she's still a woman anyone with a Y-chromosome would love to have threatening you with destruction! The White Queen effortlessly decimates an Army division at the opening of the X-Men pilot, an act of carnage that starts the action off at a breakneck pace.

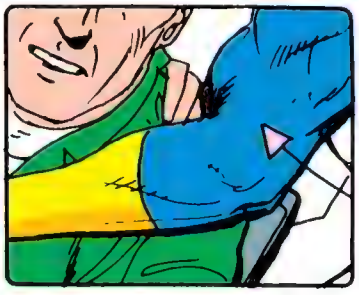
THE BLOB: This is one of my personal favorites in the show — when he boasts, in his dumb, gruff, carny worker voice, "NOTHING CAN MOVE — THE BLOB!" — I believe him. Yeah, the guy's a chunk, looking identical to his comics persona in his Freedom Force-style outfit, and he sounds like a blob, too! His presence here is only logical, when you stop to consider he's the longest-lived member of the Brotherhood, dating back from the group's first organization (check your copy of X-MEN MARVEL MASTERWORKS for the tale), all the way to its current operations for the government.

JUGGERNAUT: And if nothing can move the Blob, nothing can stop Jugs, either. His helmet has been slightly modified, with two bands to secure his helmet to the body of his costume. This wasn't done to protect the helmet (though maybe Cain Marko should consider the idea), but rather to help the character animate better — the bands allow artists to suggest his head turning, where the normal pot-like helmet would not allow that kind of flexibility. Though not normally a member of the Brotherhood, his continuity is still intact; he remains the evil step-brother of Charles Xavier, Professor X.

THE TOAD: Another premiere member of the Brotherhood, the Toad adds to the villainy on hand, answering all of television's questions about what Peter Lorre's little brother would be like. Ol' Toady cringes and cowers in fine fettle (and you know how painful that can be), looking every bit the wimpy henchman we've come to know and love.

PYRO: He's lean, he's mean, he's Australian. His fire powers make him a particularly strong choice for animation, and as with the Toad, his costume is a perfect replica of the one to be found in Marvel Comics.

There you have it: fifteen major Marvel characters, all of whom (believe it or not) are introduced and given their moment to shine in a breakneck twenty-two minutes of action! This astonishing feat was pulled off by writer Larry Parr, a true scripting pro, who



fleshed out and gave life to a basic plot by Meugniot, Hoberg, and Houston, with Stan Lee consulting. Here's the basic outline of the pilot, entitled:

"PRYDE OF THE X-MEN!": The voice of Stan Lee himself introduces the show, warning you that the age of mutants is upon us, that anyone you know, even the person sitting next to you, might be a mutant! A caravan of Army trucks drives across a desolate plain, transporting their prisoner — the malevolent Magneto, held captive by a stasis field. The guards are more than a bit freaked by their assignment; they know how dangerous evil mutants can be.

And they're about to get a second lesson, for suddenly they're under attack — by the White Queen! Using her mental powers as force bolts to scatter the guards, she frees her ally, Magneto, who flies off into the night with hero, boasting of his ultimate plan to rule homo sapiens!

In Westchester, a cab driver drops Kitty Pryde off at Xavier's mansion, and speeds away without looking back. Kitty holds a letter from Charles Xavier, offering her help with her new powers. Who is he? How does he know about her "phasing"? Entering the mansion, she is greeted by Xavier's astral image — he ushers her back to meet him in the flesh, standing at the control panel of Cerebro! The amazing computer, he explains, helps track down mutants so that he can help them adjust to their powers and assist in the battle against evil mutants. He shows her Cerebro's "mutant power circuit," (MPC) which allows a mutant to enhance his normal abilities — this is how Xavier's telepathic powers are extended through Cerebro to locate emerging mutants.

Kitty starts to break down at the news that she definitely is a mutant — a freak — but Xavier consoles her. "At one time we were all afraid," he tells her. And with that, he shows her the Danger Room, where she sees the X-Men in action for the first time: Cyclops, Storm, Colossus, Wolverine, Dazzler, and—

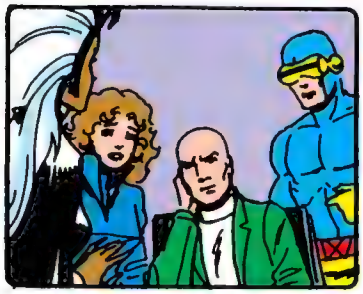
Nightcrawler, who teleports into the control room and kisses Kitty's hand gallantly. Terrified by the sight (and probably smell) of him, Kitty phases away — through the mansion's computer system, disrupting its defenses and allowing the entrace of Magneto! Together with Juggernaut, he seizes the MPC from the overwhelmed Xavier and Nightcrawler, and the terrified Kitty. Leaving, Magneto urges Kitty to join him rather than Xavier, since humans hate and fear mutants as their natural superiors; by the time the rest of the team can arrive, the two villains are gone.

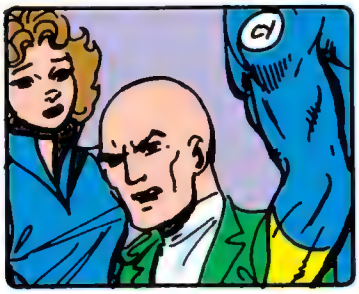
Kitty, guilty over not being able to keep the MPC safe from Magneto, is consoled by Dazzler: none of them she confides, would be able to stand alone against Magneto. News reports clue the team into more exploits of the Brotherhood: the Blob and Pyro are holding a family captive at a local observatory! Why? Their sinister purpose is a secret for now. The X-Men free the captives, but the villains escape — and the rescued family is as scared of the X-Men as they are of the Brotherhood.

Xavier, through telepathic probes, discovers Magneto's plan: through the observatory he located the Scorpio Comet, and he plans to use the MPC to tear the comet from its orbit and send it toward the Earth! The resulting cloud of dust and debris will send our planet into a new Ice Age, where most of humanity will die off, and mutants led by Magneto will emerge to rule over the survivors! The team prepares to board the Blackbird, to jet out to Asteroid M. Kitty insists on going along, but Wolverine is skeptical — she's just a kid! "I am not a kid," she declares, "I'm fourteen years old!" She vows to show them she can cut it with the best of them! Donning her own costume, she sets out to join them!

Stowing away aboard the craft through her phasing power, she is right there with the team when they don their space gear and assault Asteroid M. There they make short work of the Brotherhood: Dazzler overwhelms Pyro, Wolverine tosses the Toad aside like an old sandwich, Colossus bests Juggernaut, Nightcrawler outwits the Blob, and Cyclops blasts the White Queen. Kitty and Nightcrawler make it through to Magneto's sanctum sanctorum, but he gloats in victory — the Scorpio Comet is headed for Earth, thanks to the magnification of his powers by the MPC. But through phasing, Kitty knocks Magneto off balance so that one of his magnetic blasts damages the MPC linkup, pulling the Scorpio Comet toward Asteroid M itself! Earth will be saved—

But will Nightcrawler? He's using his own body to keep the MPC





linkup intact, continuing to guide the Comet. The rest of the team evacuates, but Nightcrawler stays, sacrificing himself. How can he teleport into the Blackbird? It's too far away! Xavier tries to pilot the craft near enough for Nightcrawler to bamf aboard, but then the comet hits — the asteroid is destroyed!

Kitty regrets her fear of Nightcrawler — she's never seen anything so brave. Just then, Nightcrawler appears outside the craft — he's bamfed himself into the void of space! He cannot survive, can he? Well, of course he can — from within Kitty's locker he emerged, safe and sound, if a bit exhausted. Kitty apologizes to him, making up for her earlier feelings; she's made a true friend. And she has another friend — the little dragon Lockheed, apparently an indigenous resident of Asteroid M, "adopts" her as well. Everyone happily welcomes Kitty to the team . . . except Wolverine. So what if she survived a simple mission like this? "That don't make her an X-Man yet," he growls.

And there you have it! It's the closest thing to a Marvel Comic yet to be produced, and one of the most enjoyable things I've seen on a TV screen in a long time — totally devoid of camp and tongue-in-cheek nonsense, produced and written by people as fond of the characters as you are. We'll keep you posted here in MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE with further production and airdate details as soon as we have them! In the meantime, you can start learning the words to the soon-to-be-immortal X-MEN Theme Song, as penned by the Man himself, Stan Lee:

A Storm model sheet from the X-Men animation TV show "bible."

No place to hide, no place to run—

The Mutant Age has now begun—

X-Men — this is their day—

X-Men — coming your way!

Magneto's hordes are on their way—

To pillage, burn and plunder,

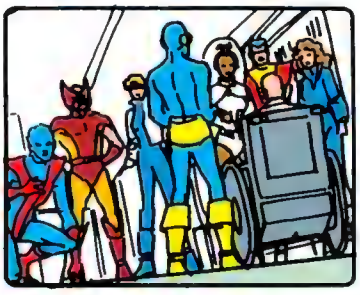
But there's one team that will not yield,

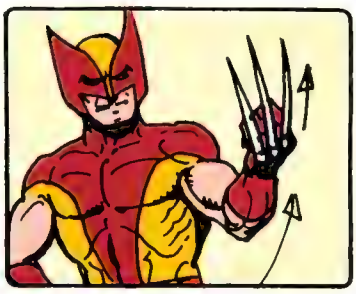
The team that strikes like thunder:

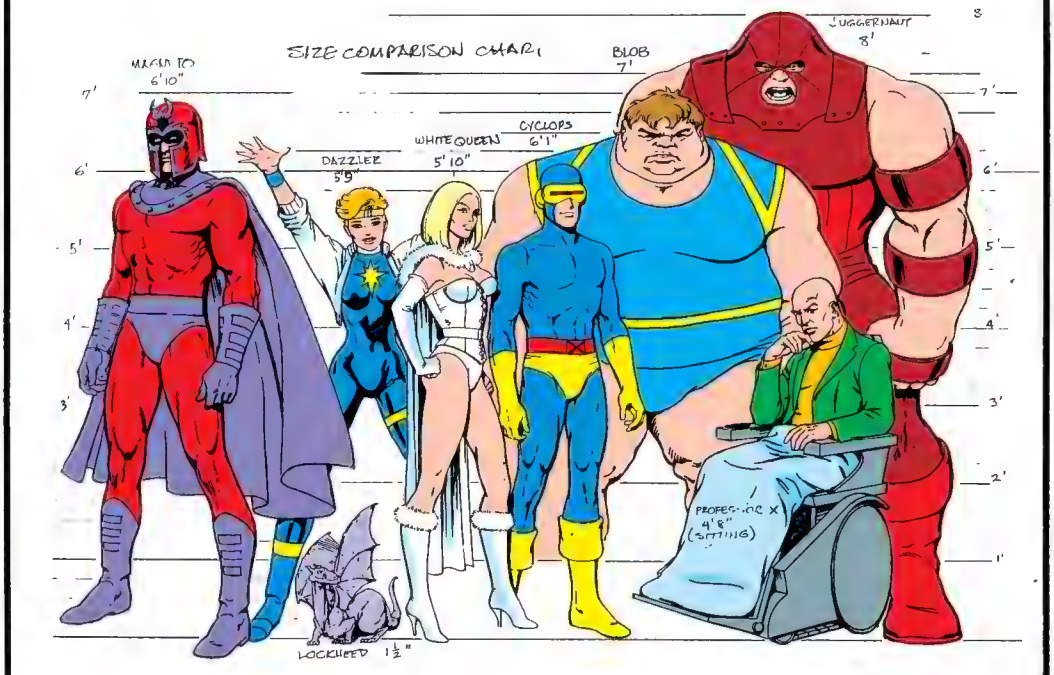
X-Men — this is their day!

X-Men — coming your way!

—*Brian Nelson*






SIZE COMPARISON CHART
MAGNETO
6'10"
DAZZLER
5'9"
WHITE QUEEN
5'10"
CYCLOPS
6'1"
BLOB
7'
JUGGERNAUT
8'
PROFESSOR X
4'8"
(SITTING)
LOCKHEED
1½"

SIZE COMPARISON CHART
KITTY
5'3"
STORM
5'9"
PYRO
5'10"
WOLVERINE
5'6½"
NIGHTCRAWLER
5'2"
TOAD
4'11"
COLOSSUS
6'10"

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The X-Men vs. The Avengers TPB (1993) cover

By Kirk Jarvinen, Brad Vancata & Paul Mounts

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Magneto:
Master of Magnetism, savior of mankind, one-time leader of the X-Men, enemy of the human race, and wanted for numerous crimes against humanity.

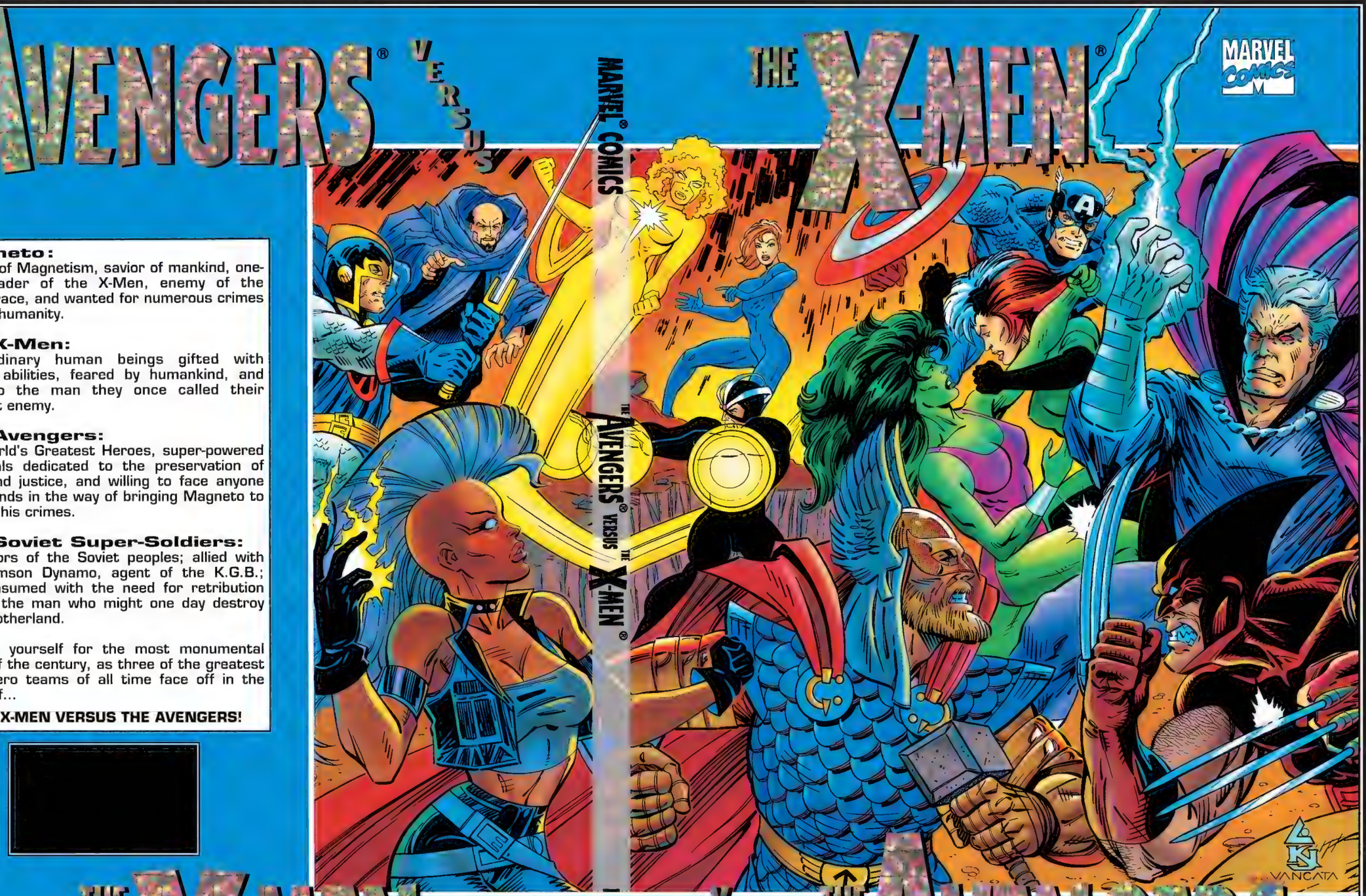
The X-Men:
Extraordinary human beings gifted with mutant abilities, feared by humankind, and allies to the man they once called their greatest enemy.

The Avengers:
The World's Greatest Heroes, super-powered individuals dedicated to the preservation of truth and justice, and willing to face anyone who stands in the way of bringing Magneto to trial for his crimes.

The Soviet Super-Soldiers:
Protectors of the Soviet peoples; allied with the Crimson Dynamo, agent of the K.G.B.; and consumed with the need for retribution against the man who might one day destroy their Motherland.

Prepare yourself for the most monumental battle of the century, as three of the greatest super hero teams of all time face off in the pages of...

THE X-MEN VERSUS THE AVENGERS!



THE X-MEN® VERSUS THE AVENGERS®

Reprinting *The X-Men vs. The Avengers* #1-4

BIOGRAPHIES

CHRIS CLAREMONT

It is hard to remember a time when the word "mutant" didn't correspond with the largest and most ardently followed franchise in comics, but in the mid-'70s the X-Men were naught but a forgotten team of misfits. Chris Claremont and his collaborators took this moribund property and issue by issue transformed it into a phenomenon now known the world over.

Claremont began his career in comics in the early '70s pitching in on issues of *Avengers*, *Daredevil* and *Incredible Hulk*, while also delivering several text stories to Marvel's black-and-white magazines. His first regular writing gig was *War Is Hell*, a "weird war" title that came to a close just as his run on *X-Men* and *Iron Fist* began. *Iron Fist*, which rolled out of the pages of *Marvel Premiere*, was done in concert with artist John Byrne, forming a key partnership that would pay big dividends later. Other high-profile projects from Claremont's first full decade in comics included *Marvel Preview*'s Starlord, *Ms. Marvel*, *Marvel Team-Up* (again with Byrne) and *John Carter: Warlord of Mars*.

But it was in the pages of *X-Men* where Claremont would change comics history. In tandem with artists Dave Cockrum and John Byrne, Claremont helped build a cornerstone franchise for Marvel. After writer Len Wein launched the newly updated series in 1975 with *Giant-Size X-Men* #1, Claremont was tasked with guiding the new adventures of the mutant misfits, and he did so by crafting layered stories that balanced crisp dialogue with high-octane action. Claremont placed a premium on characterization, a lofty goal in a team book with many players, but he did so deftly enough to spin a wide-ranging tapestry of characters, each of whom became fan favorites.

Leading breathless fans down the path of classics including "The Dark Phoenix Saga," "Days of Future Past," and *God Loves, Man Kills*, he helped build such an intense loyalty that it only made sense to spin-off the X-Men's success into new books. The first such spin-off was *The New Mutants*. Later in the decade, Claremont launched *Excalibur* with Alan Davis and established a regular series for Wolverine with John Buscema.

In 1990, he launched a new sister title for the main team of mutants with Jim Lee; *X-Men* #1 premiered to numbers that made it the highest-selling comic ever. After a long break from the company, Claremont returned to Marvel in 2000, and over the next ten years wrote the novelization of Bryan Singer's X-Men film, took on the Fantastic Four, and charted the adventures of Marvel's mutants across a variety of titles. He was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame with its 2015 class.

ROGER STERN

Born in Noblesville, Indiana, in 1950, Roger Stern was a self-professed "child of the '50s," immersing himself in pop culture icons like Lucille Ball, the Lone Ranger, and especially Superman. After graduating from Indiana University, Stern worked at Indianapolis' WXLW radio and formed a comic fan collective with fans in the region. Stern teamed with fellow Hoosier Bob Layton to transform Layton's comic sales business into the fanzine *CPL* (*Contemporary Pictorial Literature*). Their efforts led to an offer from Charlton to create the publisher's official fanzine, *Charlton Bullseye*. Soon after, Stern's fandom pal Roger Slifer contacted him with an opportunity to interview for a Marvel staff job. Stern raced to New York to put his passion for comics to the test. He was hired as an assistant editor and in 1975 embarked on an eleven-year career at Marvel. Stern's early editing duties saw him guiding the Avengers family of titles, *Master of Kung Fu*, *Spider-Woman*, and others. He also presided over *X-Men* during the seminal Chris Claremont, John Byrne, and Terry Austin run, and plotted *Marvel Premiere* #50 starring rocker Alice Cooper.

In 1978, he began to take on regular writing work on *The Incredible Hulk* and *Doctor Strange*. His compelling storytelling quickly earned him an audience and turns writing *Captain America* and Spider-Man in *The Spectacular Spider-Man*. The latter title led to his tenure on *The Amazing Spider-Man*, a run regarded by many as second only to Stan Lee's. Amongst their many Spidey highlights, Stern and artist John Romita Jr. introduced the Hobgoblin and a new Captain Marvel, Monica Rambeau. Stern also began a long stint on *The Avengers*, launched *West Coast Avengers*, and returned for another celebrated run on *Doctor Strange*.

When his tenure with Marvel came to an end in the late '80s, Stern became indelibly linked to the Man of Steel with iconic work that included "The Death of Superman." Since then "Uncle Rog," as he is known to his devoted fans, has returned to Marvel to write several series including *Avengers Forever*, *Amazing Spider-Man*, *Marvel: The Lost Generation*, *Captain America Corps*, and more.

MARC SILVESTRI

Born in Florida in 1958, Marc Silvestri grew up with a love for comics and science fiction movies that inspired him to become a comic book artist. He developed his skills well enough that by the age of 23, he attended a convention to try to gauge interest in his work. DC vice president and veteran artist Joe Orlando was impressed enough with the young Silvestri's portfolio that he hired him to draw backup stories in DC's horror anthologies. Silvestri jumped over to Marvel soon after, settling in for a long run on *King Conan/Conan the King*, after which he illustrated the Marvel Graphic Novel *Revenge of the Living Monolith*, issues of *X-Factor* and *Web of Spider-Man*. In 1987, he established himself as one of the defining artists of the X-Men, first with the *X-Men vs. The Avengers* miniseries, then an iconic run drawing *The Uncanny X-Men* that would last through 1990. He followed that up with a two-year stint on *Wolverine* that delved deeper into the character's origins. In the summer of 1992, Silvestri and six of his peers shocked the comics industry by leaving Marvel and forming Image Comics, a creator-owned independent publishing company. Under his Image imprint Top Cow, he created and drew *Cyberforce*, joined by brother Eric as

scripter, and scripted the spinoff series *Codename: Stryke Force*. In 1995, he co-created *The Darkness* with writer Garth Ennis and *Witchblade*, a property that Silvestri helped develop into its own popular 2001-2002 TV series on the TNT network. Silvestri returned to Marvel in 2004, drawing *New X-Men* "Here Comes Tomorrow," the conclusion to Grant Morrison's revolutionary run. Since then, Silvestri has contributed to the X-Men events "Messiah Complex" and "Utopia," issues of Jason Aaron's *The Incredible Hulk* series and dozens of covers for Marvel.

ALAN DAVIS

Born and raised in England's Midlands, Alan Davis was exposed to American comics during his adolescence. While pursuing an early passion for drawing, Davis developed an impressive sense of style without any formal art training. He soon became connected with Paul Neary, the editor-in-chief of Marvel UK, and signed on to draw a relaunch of *Captain Britain*. Learning the ropes from Neary, Davis drew the adventures of Captain Britain in *Marvel Superheroes* and his own title, the latter part of which he worked with writer Alan Moore. He also drew several chapters of the groundbreaking Marvelman series (known in the U.S. as Miracleman) in *Warrior* before making the jump across the Atlantic to DC Comics. There he was assigned to the high-profile *Batman and the Outsiders* book written by Mike Barr. After a six-issue stint on *Detective Comics*, Davis shifted to Marvel in 1986, where he introduced British-born super hero Psylocke in *New Mutants Annual* #2 and immediately carried her over into the lineup of *The Uncanny X-Men*. Writer Chris Claremont, long a fan of Davis' work, joined with the artist for *Excalibur*, an X-Men spinoff based in England that they collaborated on for nearly two years. Davis would return to *Excalibur* in 1991, this time as both artist and writer, for another nearly two-year stint. Next, Davis introduced *ClanDestine*, a series inspired by British history and lore, featuring new characters created by Davis. In the early 2000s, Davis contributed his fan-favorite art to *X-Men*, *Avengers* and *Fantastic Four: The End*. He wrote and drew a six-issue *Killraven* series in 2002 and reunited with Claremont in 2004 for an extended run on *The Uncanny X-Men*. Davis launched the 2012 *Wolverine* series with writer Paul Cornell, wrote and drew a four-issue run of *Savage Hulk* and collaborated with Jim Starlin on his Thanos graphic novels and Roy Thomas on the writer's return to *Savage Sword of Conan*.

TOM DEFALCO

Writer/editor Tom DeFalco broke into the comic book industry in 1972 at Archie Comics. After serving in a staff position where he inaugurated the highly successful line of Archie digests, he would later begin writing for the Archie line. By the late '70s, he also had a stint on *Superman Family* and stories in *Marvel Two-In-One* and *Avengers*. He joined with iconic Marvel artist Steve Ditko on *Machine Man* in 1980 and launched Marvel's first direct-market exclusive title, *Dazzler*.

By 1981, he had begun to work solely for Marvel, returning to *Marvel Two-In-One* for a 13-issue run. Soon after, DeFalco transitioned to editing, with a stable including the Spider-Man family of titles, *Micronauts*, *Ghost Rider*, *G.I. Joe* and *Marvel Super-Heroes Secret Wars*. In addition to his editorial role, he still wrote a handful of titles, most notably *Amazing Spider-Man* and the 1984 *Machine Man* limited series illustrated by Barry Windsor-Smith and Herb Trimpe. In 1987, DeFalco began a celebrated run on *Thor* with artist Ron Frenz. Soon after that, he was named Marvel's editor-in-chief. A need to make up for a budget shortfall at the beginning of his EIC tenure led DeFalco to launch a line of deluxe hardcover reprints—the *Marvel Masterworks*. Under his guidance, creative freedom at Marvel expanded, as did the line of titles, and the company marked its highest-selling titles of all time, including Claremont and Lee's *X-Men*, McFarlane's *Spider-Man* and Liefeld's *X-Force*. All the while, DeFalco continued writing *Thor*, where he introduced the New Warriors and Thunderstrike.

After his tenure as editor-in-chief ended, he kept on writing for Marvel, where he was heavily involved in the Spider-Man "Maximum Carnage" and "Clone Saga" storylines. In 1998, DeFalco and Frenz teamed on an issue of *What If?* for a pivotal character debut. They introduced Mayday Parker, A.K.A. Spider-Girl, a heroine that proved to be so popular that a whole universe was built around her and the adventures of her peers. The MC2 Universe was guided and developed by DeFalco, with *Spider-Girl* leading the pack in popularity, withstanding commercial pressures and notching 100 issues thanks to a legion of loyal fans. Since his work on *Spider-Girl* wrapped up in 2010, DeFalco has returned for a stint on Archie's flagship title, written *Superboy* for DC and kept busy with various freelance projects.

KERRY GAMMILL

Kerry Gammill's childhood interest in comics was kindled by Silver Age Marvel and a love of classic monsters from magazines like *Creepy* and *Eerie*. Gammill's first professional work was September 1978's *Marvel Team-Up* #73. After text piece illustrations in *Savage Sword of Conan*, he got his first ongoing gig eighteen months later on *Power Man & Iron Fist*, which he penciled for nearly two years. When he returned to *Marvel Team-Up* it was as the book's regular artist, where he penciled the adventures of Spider-Man and characters like Beast, Captain America, Vision and the Human Torch. In the mid-'80s, Gammill drew *Star Wars*, *The Further Adventures of Indiana Jones*, and entries in *The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*. After drawing a 1986 *Wonder Man* one-shot, he dabbled in the X-Universe with the limited series *Fallen Angels* and an issue of *Uncanny X-Men*. By the end of the '80s, Gammill moved his talents to DC, where he drew *Superman* and *Action Comics*, both series scribed by Roger Stern. After a brief return to Marvel, where he drew the first two issues of *Deadly Foes of Spider-Man*, Gammill reduced his comics work to cover art as he established himself in advertising and as a conceptual and storyboard artist in movies and TV. In 2010, he returned to comics to indulge his love of monsters in *Bela Lugosi's Tales From the Grave* for his creator-owned Monsterverse imprint.

RICK LEONARDI

As soon as Rick Leonardi graduated from Dartmouth College in 1979, he sent Marvel and DC a self-written and -drawn comic

book that spoke to his artistic potential. Marvel wrote back, encouraging him to take a job with them. In his first years in comics, Leonardi eased himself into the business with a handful of stories in *Thor* and *The Spectacular Spider-Man*. After proving himself, he landed a pair of higher-profile gigs with writer Bill Mantlo on the 1982 miniseries *The Vision and the Scarlet Witch* and *Cloak and Dagger*. After penciling issues of *The Amazing Spider-Man*—and being a part of the development of Spider-Man's new black costume with Mike Zeck—Leonardi reunited with Mantlo to launch an ongoing *Cloak and Dagger* series in 1985. He followed that up with Marvel's top-selling X-titles, drawing a Colossus serial in *Marvel Comics Presents* and several issues of *The Uncanny X-Men* and *The New Mutants*. In 1992, Leonardi and Peter David created Miguel O'Hara in *Spider-Man 2099*, a series Leonardi would draw for most of the first 25 issues of its run. In the late '90s, Leonardi drew the five-issue series *Painkiller Jane* for Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti's Event Comics, and in the 2000s, he would head to DC for stints with *Batgirl*, *Vigilante* and *Nightwing*. A longtime fan of Batman, Leonardi's most recent project is the ongoing series *Batman Beyond*.

KEITH POLLARD

One of its most high-profile artists in the late '70s and early '80s, Keith Pollard's tenure at Marvel was notable for his sleek, refined renderings of the company's most iconic characters. He broke in at Marvel in 1974, drawing such characters as Deathlok in *Astonishing Tales*, Shang-Chi in *Master of Kung Fu*, and the super-hero action of *Black Goliath*, *Ms. Marvel*, and Black Panther in *Jungle Action*. After a stint on the black-and-white *Rampaging Hulk* magazine, Pollard was ushered into the starting lineup of creators on three of Marvel's flagship titles.

Starting in 1978, Pollard provided breakdown art on *Fantastic Four* for the legendary Joe Sinnott to finish. Soon after landing his *FF* gig, he began penciling *The Amazing Spider-Man* and then took the reins from "Big" John Buscema on *Thor*, starting a run that would encompass the epic "Eternals Saga" storyline. All in all, Pollard's hand guided the visuals of these three prime Marvel titles simultaneously, and his tenures on each book are memorable additions to each title's legacy.

In the early '80s, Pollard took on a new stable of heroes at DC, drawing several issues of *Green Lantern* and launching *The Vigilante* with writer Marv Wolfman. He returned to regular series work at Marvel in 1989, once again drawing *Fantastic Four*. By 1995, Pollard retired from comics, although he is currently appearing at conventions and doing commissioned art for his fans.

MARSHALL ROGERS

Born in Flushing, New York, on January 22, 1950, Marshall Rogers attended Kent State University in the late '60s and studied architecture. His passion, though, was comic book illustration, and after a few years of fruitlessly marketing his art to publishers, he broke into the business at the age of 27. Among his first gigs in comics were stories in black-and-white magazines *Planet of the Apes* and *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*, as well as a pair of Elongated Man tales in *Detective Comics*. Influenced by Jack Kirby's figurework and Neal Adams' anatomical precision, as well as peers like Walter Simonson and Howard Chaykin, Rogers quickly established himself as a rising star.

In 1977, he teamed with writer Steve Englehart on the adventures of Batman in *Detective* #468-479, which proved to be a high-water mark for the series, with his depictions of Batman and the Joker influencing Tim Burton's 1989 *Batman* film. Also at DC, Rogers and Englehart revived Jack Kirby's *Mister Miracle* to fan's acclaim. After drawing a Daughters of the Dragon story in *Bizarre Adventures* #25 and a Howard the Duck story in the comedy fowl's titular magazine, Rogers took on the art chores of his first regular Marvel title with *Doctor Strange*, drawing half-a-dozen issues of Roger Stern's seminal run. In the midst of his *Doctor Strange* work, he and Englehart solidified their ongoing collaboration with Coyote—a project which debuted in *Eclipse Magazine*—and *Scorpio Rose*. Another Eclipse project, *Detectives Inc.,* saw Rogers drawing Don McGregor's graphic novel detective stories.

JIM SHOOTER

Writer/artist/editor/publisher Jim Shooter broke into comics as a precocious 13-year-old after submitting a batch of Legion of Super-Heroes pages he had written and drawn. Impressed by what was going on at Marvel, the teenager brought his "Marvel-style" attitude to bear on Legion, rolling off a three-year run that concluded in 1969. During this time, he introduced several memorable Legionnaires and villains and also wrote several stories in *Superman*.

After a five-year break from comics, Shooter returned to the scene, freelancing for both Marvel and DC. He retook the reins of Legion in *Superboy*, and wrote various Marvel titles, which led to a staff position at Marvel in 1976 and a memorable run on *Avengers*. After two years, he succeeded Archie Goodwin as Marvel's editor-in-chief. In his view, Marvel at that time was in editorial chaos, not capitalizing on its full potential. Only 27 years old, Shooter forced his will over all aspects of the publishing regime, establishing an incentive system for creators, streamlining the publishing schedule and enforcing his own high editorial standards on all the books. He continued Marvel's success with licensed titles *G.I. Joe* and *Transformers* and the Epic line of creator-owned comics. Creative efforts included writing *Secret Wars* and its sequel, and building the New Universe and writing its flagship title, *Starbrand*.

Forced out of the company in 1987, a bid by Shooter to buy Marvel failed. He then formed a group to start his own company, Valiant, which produced licensed and original comics to great acclaim in the early '90s. Despite Valiant's success, Shooter's tenure there was ended after losing control of the corporation. Short-lived imprints Defiant and Broadway Comics followed but were victims of the mid-'90s industry bust. Since then, Shooter has returned to DC to write a 13-issue run of *Legion*, and overseen a revival of Gold Key characters Magnus, Doctor Solar and Turok for Dark Horse.

Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

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